











*VENUS AND ADONIS*

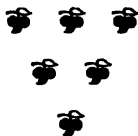
*THE RAPE OF LUCRECE*

*THE "POCKET FALSTAFF"*  
*EDITION OF SHAKESPEARE'S*  
*COMPLETE WORKS*





VENUS AND  
ADONIS : : :  
THE RAPE OF  
LUCRECE : *By*  
*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE* \* \* \* \*



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# VENUS AND ADONIS



# VENUS AND ADONIS.

*'Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo  
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.'*

TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY  
WRIOTHESLY,  
EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON, AND BARON  
OF TICHFIELD.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

*I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden: only, if your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a god-father, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content; which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.*

Your honour's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Even as the sun with purple-colour'd face  
 Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,  
 Rose-cheek'd Adonis hied him to the chase ;  
 Hunting he loved, but love he laugh'd to scorn ;  
 Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,  
 And like a bold-faced suitor 'gins to woo him.

'Thrice-fairer than myself,' thus she began,  
 'The field's chief flower, sweet above compare,  
 Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man,  
 More white and red than doves or roses are ;  
 Nature that made thee, with herself at strife,  
 Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.

'Vouchsafe, thou wonder, to alight thy steed,  
 And rein his proud head to the saddle-bow ;  
 If thou wilt deign this favour, for thy meed  
 A thousand honey secrets shalt thou know :  
 Here come and sit, where never serpent hisses ;  
 And being set, I'll smother thee with kisses :

'And yet not cloy thy lips with loathed satiety,  
 But rather famish them amid their plenty,  
 Making them red and pale with fresh variety ;  
 Ten kisses short as one, one long as twenty :  
 A summer's day will seem an hour but short,  
 Being wasted in such time-beguiling sport.'

With this she seizeth on his sweating palm,  
 The precedent of pith and livelihood,

And trembling in her passion, calls it balm,  
 Earth's sovereign salve to do a goddess good :  
 Being so enraged, desire doth lend her force  
 Courageously to pluck him from his horse.

Over one arm the lusty courser's rein,  
 Under her other was the tender boy,  
 Who blush'd and pouted in a dull disdain,  
 With leaden appetite, unapt to toy ;  
 She red and hot as coals of glowing fire,  
 He red for shame, but frosty in desire.

The studded bridle on a ragged bough  
 Nimbly she fastens ; O ! how quick is love !  
 The steed is stalled up, and even now  
 To tie the rider she begins to prove :  
 Backward she push'd him, as she would be thrust  
 And govern'd him in strength, though not in  
 lust.

So soon was she along, as he was down,  
 Each leaning on their elbows and their hips :  
 Now doth she stroke his cheek, now doth he frown,  
 And 'gins to chide, but soon she stops his lips ;  
 And kissing speaks, with lustful language  
 broken,  
 ' If thou wilt chide, thy lips shall never open.'

He burns with bashful shame ; she with her tears  
 Doth quench the maiden burning of his cheeks ;

Then with her windy sighs and golden hairs  
 To fan and blow them dry again she seeks :  
 He saith she is immodest, blames her miss ;  
 What follows more she murders with a kiss.

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast,  
 Tires with her beak on feathers, flesh and bone,  
 Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,  
 Till either gorge be stuff'd or prey be gone ;  
 Even so she kiss'd his brow, his cheek, his chin,  
 And where she ends she doth anew begin.

Forced to consent, but never to obey,  
 Panting he lies, and breatheth in her face ;  
 She feedeth on the steam as on a prey,  
 And calls it heavenly moisture, air of grace ;  
 Wishing her cheeks were gardens full of flowers,  
 So they were dew'd with such distilling showers.

Look ! how a bird lies tangled in a net,  
 So fasten'd in her arms Adonis lies ;  
 Pure shame and awed resistance made him fret,  
 Which bred more beauty in his angry eyes :  
 Rain added to a river that is rank  
 Perforce will force it overflow the bank.

Still she entreats, and prettily entreats,  
 For to a pretty ear she tunes her tale ;  
 Still is he sullen, still he lours and frets,  
 Twixt crimson shame and anger ashy-pale ;  
 Being red, she loves him best ; and being white,  
 Her best is better'd with a more delight.

Look how he can, she cannot choose but love ;  
 And by her fair immortal hand she swears,  
 From his soft bosom never to remove,  
 Till he take truce with her contending tears,  
 Which long have rain'd, making her cheeks all  
 wet ;  
 And one sweet kiss shall pay this countless debt.

Upon this promise did he raise his chin,  
 Like a dive-dapper peering through a wave,  
 Who, being look'd on, ducks as quickly in ;  
 So offers he to give what she did crave ;  
 But when her lips were ready for his ray,  
 \* He winks, and turns his lips another way.

Never did passenger in summer's heat  
 More thirst for drink than she for this good turn.  
 Her help she sees, but help she cannot get ;  
 She bathes in water, yet her fire must burn .  
 'O ! pity,' 'gan she cry, 'flint-hearted boy :  
 'Tis but a kiss I beg ; why art thou coy ?

'I have been woo'd, as I entreat thee now,  
 Even by the stern and direful god of war,  
 Whose sinewy neck in battle ne'er did bow,  
 Who conquers where he comes in every jar ;  
 Yet hath he been my captive and my slave,  
 And begg'd for that which thou unask'd shalt  
 have.

'Over my altars hath he hung his lance,  
 His batter'd shield, his uncontrolled crest,  
 And for my sake hath learn'd to sport and dance,  
 To toy, to wanton, dally, smile and jest ; \*



Scorning his churlish drum and ensign red,  
 Making my arms his field, his tent my bed.

'Thus he that overruled I oversway'd,  
 Leading him prisoner in a red-rose chain :  
 Strong-temper'd steel his stronger strength obey'd,  
 Yet was he servile to my coy disdain.

O ! be not proud, nor brag not of thy might,  
 For mastering her that foil'd the god of fight.

'Touch but my lips with those fair lips of thine,  
 Though mine be not so fair, yet are they red,  
 The kiss shall be thine own as well as mine.  
 What seest thou in the ground ? hold up thy  
 head :

Look in mine eyeballs, there thy beauty lies ;  
 Then why not lips on lips, since eyes in eyes ?

'Art thou ashamed to kiss ? then wink again,  
 And I will wink ; so shall the day seem night ;  
 Love keeps his revels where there are but twain ;  
 Be bold to play, our sport is not in sight :

These blue-vein'd violets whereon we lean  
 Never can blab, nor know not what we mean.

'The tender spring upon thy tempting lip  
 Shows thee unripe, yet may'st thou well be tasted.  
 Make use of time, let not advantage slip ;  
 Beauty within itself should not be wasted :

Fair flowers that are not gather'd in their  
 prime

Rot and consume themselves in little time.

'Were I hard-favour'd, foul, or wrinkled-old,  
Ill-nurtured, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,  
O'erworn, despised, rheumatic, and cold,  
Thick-sighted, barren, lean, and lacking juice,  
Then might'st thou pause, for then I were not  
for thee ;  
But having no defects, why dost abhor me ?

'Thou canst not see one wrinkle in my brow ;  
Mine eyes are grey and bright, and quick in  
turning ;  
My beauty as the spring doth yearly grow ;  
My flesh is soft and plump, my marrow burning ;  
My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand  
felt,  
Would in thy palm dissolve, or seem to melt.

'Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear,  
Or like a fairy trip upon the green,  
Or like a nymph, with long dishevell'd hair,  
Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen :  
Love is a spirit all compact of fire,  
Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire.

'Witness this primrose bank whereon I lie ;  
These forceless flowers like sturdy trees support  
me ;  
Two strengthless doves will draw me through the  
sky,  
From morn till night, even where I live to sport  
me :  
Is love so light, sweet boy, and may it be  
That thou shouldst think it heavy unto thee ?

‘Is thine own heart to thine own face affected?  
 Can thy right hand seize love upon thy left?  
 Then woo thyself, be of thyself rejected  
 Steal thine own freedom, and complain on theft:  
 Narcissus so himself himself forsook,  
 And died to kiss his shadow in the brook.

‘Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,  
 Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,  
 Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear;  
 Things growing to themselves are growth’s abuse;  
 Seeds spring from seeds, and beauty breedeth  
 beauty;  
 Thou wast begot; to get it is thy duty.

‘Upon the earth’s increase why should’st thou  
 feed,  
 Unless the earth with thy increase be fed?  
 By law of nature thou art bound to breed,  
 That thine may live when thou thyself art dead;  
 And so in spite of death thou dost survive,  
 In that thy likeness still is left alive.’

By this the love-sick queen began to sweat,  
 For where they lay the shadow had forsook them,  
 And Titan, tired in the mid-day heat,  
 With burning eye did hotly overlook them;  
 Wishing Adonis had his team to guide,  
 So he were like him and by Venus’ side.

And now Adonis, with a lazy spright,  
 And with a heavy, dark, disliking eye,  
 His louring brows o’erwhelming his fair sight,

Like misty vapours when they blot the sky,  
 Souring his cheeks, cries 'Fie! no more of love:  
 The sun doth burn my face; I must remove.'

'Ay me!' quoth Venus, 'young and so unkind?  
 What bare excuses makest thou to be gone;  
 I'll sigh celestial breath, whose gentle wind  
 Shall cool the heat of this descending sun:  
 I'll make a shadow for thee of my hairs;  
 If they burn too, I'll quench them with my  
 tears.'

'The sun, what shines from heaven shines but  
 warm,  
 And, lo! I lie between that sun and thee:  
 The heat I have from thence doth little harm,  
 Thine eye darts forth the fire that burneth me;  
 And were I not immortal, life were done  
 Between this heavenly and earthly sun.'

'Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel?  
 Nay, more than flint, for stone is more relenteth.  
 Art thou a woman's son, and canst not feel  
 What 'tis to love? how want of love tormenteth?  
 O! had thy mother borne so hard a mind,  
 She had not brought forth thee, but died  
 unkind.'

'What am I, that thou should'st contemn me this?  
 Or what great danger dwells upon my suit?  
 What were thy lips the worse for one poor kiss?  
 Speak, fair; but speak fair words, or else be  
 mute:

Give me one kiss, I'll give it thee again,  
And one for interest, if thou wilt have twain.

'Fie! lifeless picture, cold and senseless stone,  
Well-painted idol, image dull and dead,  
Statue contenting but the eye alone,  
Thing like a man, but of no woman bred :  
Thou art no man, though of a man's complexion,  
For men will kiss even by their own direction.'

This said, impatience chokes her pleading tongue,  
And swelling passion doth provoke a pause ;  
Red cheeks and fiery eyes blaze forth her wrong ;  
Being judge in love, she cannot right her cause :  
And now she weeps, and now she fain would  
speak,  
And now her sobs do her intendments break.

Sometimes she shakes her head, and then his  
hand ;  
Now gazeth she on him, now on the ground ;  
Sometimes her arms intold him like a band :  
She would, he will not in her arms be bound ;  
And when from thence he struggle to be gone,  
She locks her lily fingers one in one.

'Fondling,' she saith, 'since I have hemm'd thee  
here  
Within the circuit of this ivory pale,  
I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer ;  
Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale :  
Graze on my lips, and if those hills be dry,  
Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

' Within this limit is relief enough,  
 Sweet bottom-grass and high delightful plain,  
 Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,  
 To shelter thee from tempest and from rain :  
 Then be my deer, since I am such a park ;  
 No dog shall rouse thee, though a thousand bark.'

At this Adonis smiles as in disdain,  
 That in each cheek appears a pretty dimple :  
 Love made those hollows, if himself were slain,  
 He might be buried in a tomb so simple ;  
 Foreknowing well, if there he came to lie,  
 Why, then, Love lived and there he could not  
 die.

These lovely caves, these round enchanting pits,  
 Open'd their mouths to swallow Venus' liking.  
 Being mad before, how doth she now for wits ?  
 Struck dead at first, what needs a second striking ?  
 Poor Queen of love, in thine own law forlorn,  
 To love a cheek that smiles at thee in scorn !

Now which way shall she turn ? what shall she  
 say ?

Her words are done, her woes the more increasing ;  
 The time is spent, her object will away,  
 And from her twining arms doth urge releasing.  
 ' Pity ! ' she cries, ' some favour, some remorse !'  
 Away he springs, and hasteth to his horse.

But, lo ! from forth a copse that neighbours by,  
 A breeding jennet, lusty, young, and proud,

Adonis' trampling courser doth espy,  
 And forth she rushes, snorts and neighs aloud:  
 The strong-neck'd steed, being tied unto a tree,  
 Breaketh his rein, and to her straight goes he.

Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,  
 And now his woven girths he breaks asunder ;  
 The bearing earth with his hard hoof he wounds,  
 Whose hollow womb resounds like heaven's  
 thunder ;  
 The iron bit he crusheth 'tween his teeth,  
 Controlling what he was controlled with.

His ears up-prick'd ; his braided hanging mane  
 Upon his compass'd crest now stand on end ;  
 His nostrils drink the air, and forth again,  
 As from a furnace, vapours doth he send :  
 His eye, which scornfully glisters like fire,  
 Shows his hot courage and his high desire.

Sometime he trots, as if he told the steps,  
 With gentle majesty and modest pride ;  
 Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps,  
 As who should say ' Lo ! thus my strength is tried ;  
 And this I do to captivate the eye  
 Of the fair breeder that is standing by.'

What reckoneth he his rider's angry stir,  
 His flattering holla, or his ' Stand, I say ' ?  
 What cares he now for curb or pricking spur,  
 For rich caparisons or trapping gay ?  
 He sees his love, and nothing else he sees,  
 For nothing else with his proud sight agrees.

Look, when a painter would surpass the life,  
 In limning out a well-proportion'd steed,  
 His art with nature's workmanship at strife,  
 As if the dead the living should exceed ;

So did this horse excel a common one,  
 In shape, in courage, colour, pace and bone.

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,  
 Broad breast, full eye, small head, and nostril wide,  
 High crest, short ears, straight legs and passing  
 strong,

Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide :

Look, what a horse should have he did not lack,  
 Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Sometime he scuds far off, and there he stares ;

Anon he starts at stirring of a feather ;

To bid the wind a base he now prepares,

And wh'er he run or fly they know not whether ;

For through his mane and tail the high wind  
 sings,

Fanning the hairs, who wave like feather'd wings.

He looks upon his love, and neighs unto her ;

She answers him as if she knew his mind ;

Being proud, as females are, to see him woo her,

She puts on outward strangeness, seems unkind,

Spurns at his love and scorns the heat he feels,

Beating his kind embracements with her heels.

Then, like a melancholy malecontent,

He vails his tail that, like a falling plume,



Cool shadow to his melting buttock lent :  
 He stamps, and bites the poor flies in his fume.  
 His love, perceiving how he is enraged,  
 Grew kinder, and his fury was assuaged.

His testy master goeth about to take him ;  
 When, lo ! the unback'd breeder, full of fear,  
 Jéalous of catching, swiftly doth forsake him,  
 With her the horse, and left Adonis there.  
 As they were mad, unto the wood they hie them,  
 Out-stripping crows that strive to over-fly them.

All swoln with chafing, down Adonis sits,  
 Banning his boisterous and unruly beast :  
 And now the happy season once more fits,  
 That love-sick Love by pleading may be blest ;  
 For lovers say, the heart hath treble wrong  
 When it is barr'd the aidance of the tongue.

An oven that is stopp'd, or river stay'd,  
 Burneth more hotly, swelleth with more rage :  
 So of concealed sorrow may be said ;  
 Free vent of words love's fire doth assuage ;  
 But when the heart's attorney once is mute,  
 The client breaks, as desperate in his suit.

He sees her coming, and begins to glow,  
 Even as a dying coal revives with wind,  
 And with his bonnet hides his angry brow ;  
 Looks on the dull earth with disturbed mind,  
 Taking no notice that she is so nigh,  
 For all askance he holds her in his eye.

O! what a sight it was, wistly to view  
 How she came stealing to the wayward boy ;  
 To note the fighting conflict of her hue,  
 How white and red each other did destroy :  
 But now her cheek was pale, and by and by  
 It flash'd forth fire, as lightning from the sky.

Now was she just before him as he sat,  
 And like a lowly lover down she kneels ;  
 With one fair hand she heaveth up his hat,  
 Her other tender hand his fair cheek feels :  
 His tenderer cheek receives her soft hand's print,  
 As apt as new-fall'n snow takes any dint.

O! what a war of looks was then between them ;  
 Her eyes petitioners to his eyes suing ;  
 His eyes saw her eyes as they had not seen them ;  
 Her eyes woo'd still, his eyes disdain'd the wooing :  
 And all this dumb play had his acts made plain  
 With tears, which, chorus-like, her eyes did rain.

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,  
 A lily prison'd in a gaol of snow,  
 Or ivory in an alabaster band ;  
 So white a friend engirts so white a foe :  
 This beauteous combat, wilful and unwilling,  
 Show'd like two silver doves that sit a-billing.

Once more the engine of her thoughts began :  
 'O fairest mover on this mortal round,  
 Would thou wert as I am, and I a man,  
 My heart all whole as thine, thy heart my  
 wound :

For one sweet look thy help I would assure thee,  
Though nothing but my body's bane would  
cure thee.'

'Give me my hand,' saith he, 'why dost thou feel  
it?'

'Give me my heart,' saith she, 'and thou shalt  
have it ;

O ! give it me, lest thy hard heart do steel it,  
And being steel'd, soft sighs can never grave it :  
Then love's deep groans I never shall regard,  
Because Adonis' heart hath made mine hard.'

'For shame !' he cries, 'let go, and let me go ;  
My day's delight is past, my horse is gone,  
And 't is your fault I am bereft him so :  
I pray you hence, and leave me here alone :  
For all my mind, my thought, my busy care,  
Is how to get my palfrey from the mare.'

Thus she replies : 'Thy palfrey, as he should,  
Welcomes the warm approach of sweet desire :  
Affection is a coal that must be cool'd ;  
Else, suffer'd, it will set the heart on fire.  
The sea hath bounds, but deep desire hath none ;  
Therefore no marvel though thy horse be gone.

'How like a jade he stood, tied to the tree,  
Servilely master'd with a leathern rein !  
But when he saw his love, his youth's fair fee,  
He held such petty bondage in disdain ;  
Throwing the base thong from his bending crest,  
Enfranchising his mouth, his back, his breast.

'Who sees his true-love in her naked bed,  
Teaching the sheets a whiter hue than white,  
But, when his glutton eye so full hath fed,  
His other agents aim at like delight ?

Who is so faint, that dare not be so bold  
To touch the fire, the weather being cold ?

'Let me excuse thy courser, gentle boy,  
And learn of him, I heartily beseech thee,  
To take advantage on presented joy ;  
Though I were dumb, yet his proceedings teach  
thee.

- o O ! learn to love ; the lesson is but plain,  
And once made perfect, never lost again.'

'I know not love,' quoth he, 'nor will not know it,  
Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it ;  
'Tis much to borrow, and I will not owe it ;  
My love to love is love but to disgrace it ;  
For I have heard it is a life in death,  
That laughs, and weeps, and all but with a  
breath.

'Who wears a garment shapeless and unfinish'd ?  
Who plucks the bud before one leaf put forth ?  
If springing things be any jot diminish'd,  
They wither in their prime, prove nothing worth :  
The colt that's back'd and burden'd being young  
Loseth his pride and never waxeth strong.

'You hurt my hand with wringing ; let us part,  
And leave this idle theme, this bootless chat :

Remove your siege from my unyielding heart ;  
 To love's alarms it will not ope the gate :  
 Dismiss your vows, your feigned tears, your  
 flattery ;  
 For where a heart is hard, they make no battery.'

'What ! canst thou talk ?' quoth she, 'hast thou  
 a tongue ?  
 O ! would thou hadst not, or I had no hearing ;  
 Thy mermaid's voice hath done me double wrong ;  
 I had my load before, now press'd with ceasing :  
 Melodious discord, heavenly tune harsh-sound-  
 ing,  
 Ear's deep-sweet music, and heart's deep-sore  
 wounding.

'Had I no eyes but ears, my ears would love  
 That inward beauty and invisible ;  
 Or were I deaf, thy outward parts would move  
 Each part in me that were but sensible :  
 Though neither eyes nor ears, to hear nor see,  
 Yet should I be in love by touching thee.

'Say, that the sense of feeling were bereft me,  
 And that I could not see, nor hear, nor touch,  
 And nothing but the very smell were left me,  
 Yet would my love to thee be still as much ;  
 For from the still'tory of thy face excelling  
 Comes breath perfumed that breedeth love by  
 smelling.

'But O ! what banquet wert thou to the taste,  
 Being nurse and feeder of the other four ;

Would they not wish the feast might ever last,  
 And bid Suspicion double-lock the door,  
 Lest Jealousy, that sour unwelcome guest,  
 Should, by his stealing in, disturb the feast ?'

Once more the ruby-colour'd portal open'd,  
 Which to his speech did honey passage yield ;  
 Like a red morn, that ever yet betoken'd  
 Wreck to the seaman, tempest to the field,  
 Sorrow, to shepherds, woe unto the birds,  
 Gusts and foul flaws to herdmen and to herds.

This ill presage advisedly she marketh :  
 Even as the wind is hush'd before it raineth,  
 Or as the wolf doth grin before he barketh,  
 Or as the berry breaks before it staineth,  
 Or like the deadly bullet of a gun,  
 His meaning struck her ere his words begun.

And at his look she flatly falleth down,  
 For looks kill love and love by looks reviveth ;  
 A smile recures the wounding of a frown ;  
 But blessed bankrupt, that by love so thriveth !  
 The silly boy, believing she is dead,  
 Claps her pale cheek, till clapping makes it red ;

And all amazed brake off his late intent,  
 For sharply he did think to reprehend her,  
 Which cunning love did wittily prevent :  
 Fair fall the wit that can so well defend her !  
 For on the grass she lies as she were slain,  
 Till his breath breatheth life in her again.

He wrings her nose, he strikes her on the cheeks,  
 He bends her fingers, holds her pulses hard,  
 He chafes her lips ; a thousand ways he seeks  
 To mend the hurt that his unkindness marr'd :  
 He kisses her ; and she, by her good will,  
 Will never rise, so he will kiss her still.

The night of sorrow now is turn'd to day :  
 Her two blue windows faintly she up-heaveth,  
 Like the fair sun, when in his fresh array  
 He cheers the morn and all the earth relieveth :  
 And as the bright sun glorifies the sky,  
 So is her face illumined with her eye ;

Whose beams upon his hairless face are fix'd,  
 As if from thence they borrow'd all their shine.  
 Were never four such lamps together mixed,  
 Had not his clouded with his brow's repine ;  
 But hers, which through the crystal tears gave  
 light,  
 Shone like the moon in water seen by night.

'O ! where am I ?' quoth she, ' in earth or heaven,  
 Or in the ocean drench'd, or in the fire ?  
 What hour is this ? or morn or weary even ?  
 Do I delight to die, or life desire ?  
 But now I lived, and life was death's annoy ;  
 But now I died, and death was lively joy.

'O ! thou didst kill me ; kill me once again :  
 Thy eyes' shrewd tutor, that hard heart of thine,  
 Hath taught them scornful tricks and such disdain  
 That they have murder'd this poor heart of mine ;

And these mine eyes, true leaders to their queen,  
But for thy piteous lips no more had seen.

‘ Long may they kiss each other for this cure !  
O ! never let their crimson liveries wear ;  
And as they last, their verdure still endure,  
To drive infection from the dangerous year :  
That the star-gazers, having writ on death,  
May say, the plague is banish’d by thy breath.

‘ Pure lips, sweet seals in my soft lips imprinted,  
What bargains may I make, still to be sealing ?  
To sell myself I can be well contented,  
So thou wilt buy and pay and use good dealing ;  
Which purchase if thou make, for fear of slips  
Set thy seal-manual on my wax-red lips.

‘ A thousand kisses buys my heart from me ;  
And pay them at thy leisure, one by one.  
What is ten hundred touches unto thee ?  
Are they not quickly told and quickly gone ?  
Say, for non-payment that the debt should  
double,  
Is twenty hundred kisses such a trouble ?’

‘ Fair queen,’ quoth he, ‘ if any love you owe me,  
Measure my strangeness with my unripe years :  
Before I know myself, seek not to know me ;  
No fisher but the ungrown fry forbears :  
The mellow plum doth fall, the green sticks fast,  
Or being early pluck’d is sour to taste.

‘ Look ! the world’s comforter, with weary gait,  
His day’s hot task hath ended in the west :



The owl, night's herald, shrieks 't is very late ;  
 The sheep are gone to fold, birds to their nest,  
 And coal-black clouds that shadow heaven's light  
 Do summon us to part and bid good night.

' Now let me say good night, and so say you ;  
 If you will say so, you shall have a kiss.  
 ' Good night,' quoth she ; and ere he says adieu,  
 The honey fee of parting tender'd is :  
 Her arms do lend his neck a sweet embrace ;  
 Incorporate then they seem, face grows to face.

Till, breathless, he disjoin'd, and backward drew  
 The heavenly moisture, that sweet coral mouth,  
 Whose precious taste her thirsty lips well knew,  
 Whereon they surfeit, yet complain on drouth :  
 He with her plenty press'd, she faint with dearth,  
 Their lips together glued, fall to the earth.

Now quick desire hath caught the yielding prey,  
 And glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth ;  
 Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,  
 Paying what ransom the insulter willetth ;  
 Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so  
 high,  
 That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry.

And having felt the sweetness of the spoil,  
 With blindfold fury she begins to forage ;  
 Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,  
 And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage ;  
 Planting oblivion, beating reason back,  
 Forgetting shame's pure blush and honour's  
 wrack.

Hot, faint, and weary, with her hard embracing,  
 Like a wild bird being tamed with too much  
 handling,  
 Or as the fleet-foot roe that's tired with chasing,  
 Or like the froward infant still'd with dandling,  
 He now obeys, and now no more resisteth,  
 While she takes all she can, not all she listeth.

What wax so frozen but dissolves with tempering,  
 And yields at last to every light impression?  
 Things out of hope are compass'd oft with ventur-  
 ing,  
 Chiefly in love, whose leave exceeds commission :  
 Affection faints not like a pale-faced coward,  
 But then woos best when most his choice is  
 froward.

When he did frown, O ! had she then gave over,  
 Such nectar from his lips she had not suck'd.  
 Foul words and frowns must not repel a lover ;  
 What though the rose have prickles, yet 't is  
 pluck'd :  
 Were beauty under twenty locks kept fast,  
 Yet love breaks through and picks them all at  
 last.

For pity now she can no more detain him ;  
 The poor fool prays her that he may depart :  
 She is resolved no longer to restrain him,  
 Bids him farewell, and look well to her heart,  
 The which, by Cupid's bow she doth protest,  
 He carries thence incaged in his breast.

'Sweet boy,' she says, 'this night I'll waste in  
sorrow,  
For my sick heart commands mine eyes to watch.  
Tell me, Love's master, shall we meet to-morrow?  
Say, shall we? shall we? wilt thou make the  
match?'

He tells her, no; to-morrow he intends  
To hunt the boar with certain of his friends.

'The boar!' quoth she; whereat a sudden pale,  
Like lawn being spread upon the blushing rose,  
Usurps her cheek, she trembles at his tale,  
And on his neck her yoking arms she throws:  
She sinketh down, still hanging by his neck,  
He on her belly falls, she on her back.

Now is she in the very lists of love,  
Her champion mounted for the hot encounter:  
All is imaginary she doth prove,  
He will not manage her, although he mount her;  
That worse than Tantalus' is her annoy,  
To clip Elysium and to lack her joy.

Even as poor birds, deceived with painted grapes,  
Do surfeit by the eye and pine the maw,  
Even so she languisheth in her mishaps,  
As those poor birds that helpless berries saw.  
The warm effects which she in him finds  
missing,  
She seeks to kindle with continual kissing.

But all in vain; good queen, it will not be:  
She hath assay'd as much as may be proved;

Her pleading hath deserved a greater fee ;  
 She's Love, she loves, and yet she is not loved.  
 'Fie, fie !' he says, 'you crush me ; let me go :  
 You have no reason to withhold me so.'

'Thou hadst been gone,' quoth she, 'sweet boy,  
 ere this,  
 But that thou told'st me thou wouldst hunt the  
 boar.

O ! be advised ; thou know'st not what it is  
 With javelin's point a churlish swine to gore,  
 Whose tushes never sheathed he whetteth still,  
 Like to a mortal butcher, bent to kill.

'On his bow-back he hath a battle set  
 Of bristly pikes, that ever threat his foes ;  
 His eyes like glow-worms shine when he doth  
 fret ;  
 His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes ;  
 Being moved, he strikes whate'er is in his way,  
 And whom he strikes his cruel tushes slay.

'His brawny sides, with hairy bristles arm'd,  
 Are better proof than thy spear's point can enter ;  
 His short thick neck cannot be easily harm'd ;  
 Being ireful, on the lion he will venture :  
 The thorny brambles and embracing bushes,  
 As fearful of him, part, through whom he rushes.

'Alas ! he nought esteems that face of thine,  
 To which Love's eyes pay tributary gazes ;  
 Nor thy soft hands, sweet lips, and crystal eyne,  
 Whose full perfection all the world amazes ;

But having thee at vantage, wondrous dread !  
 Would root these beauties as he roots the mead,

' O ! let him keep his loathsome cabin still ;  
 Beauty hath nought to do with such foul fiends :  
 Come not within his danger by thy will ;  
 They that thrive well take counsel of their friends.  
 When thou didst name the boar, not to dissemble,  
 I fear'd thy fortune, and my joints did tremble.

' Didst thou not mark my face ? was it not white ?  
 Saw'st thou not signs of fear lurk in mine eye ?  
 Grew I not faint ? and fell I not downright ?  
 Within my bosom, whereon thou dost lie,  
 My boding heart pants, beats, and takes no rest,  
 But, like an earthquake, shakes thee on my  
 breast.

' For where Love reigns, disturbing Jealousy  
 Doth call himself Affection's sentinel ;  
 Gives false alarms, suggesteth mutiny,  
 And in a peaceful hour doth cry " Kill, kill !"  
 Distempering gentle Love in his desire,  
 As air and water do abate the fire.'

' This sour informer, this bate-breeding spy,  
 This canker that eats up Love's tender spring,  
 This carry-tale, dissentious Jealousy,  
 That sometime true news, sometime false doth  
 bring,  
 Knocks at my heart, and whispers in mine ear  
 That if I love thee, I thy death should fear

And more than so, presenteth to mine eye  
 The picture of an angry-chafing boar,  
 Under whose sharp fangs on his back doth lie  
 An image like thyself, all stain'd with gore ;  
 Whose blood upon the fresh flowers being shed  
 Doth make them droop with grief and hang the  
 head.

What should I do, seeing thee so indeed,  
 That tremble at the imagination ?  
 The thought of it doth make my faint heart bleed,  
 And fear doth teach it divination :  
 I prophesy thy death, my living sorrow,  
 If thou encounter with the boar to-morrow.

But if thou needs wilt hunt, be ruled by me ;  
 Uncouple at the timorous flying hare,  
 Or at the fox which lives by subtlety,  
 Or at the roe which no encounter dare :  
 Pursue these fearful creatures o'er the downs,  
 And on thy well-breath'd horse keep with thy  
 hounds.

And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,  
 Mark the poor wretch, to overshoot his troubles  
 How he outruns the wind, and with what care  
 He cranks and crosses with a thousand doubles :  
 The many musets through the which he goes  
 Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes

Sometime he runs among a flock of sheep,  
 To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,

*VENUS AND ADONIS.*

And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,  
 To stop the loud pursuers in their yell,  
 And sometime sorteth with a herd of deer,  
 Danger deviseth shifts ; wit waits on fear :

‘ For there his smell with others being mingled,  
 The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,  
 Ceasing their clamorous cry till they have singled  
 With much ado the cold fault cleanly out ;  
 Then do they spend their mouths : Echo replies,  
 As if another chase were in the skies.

‘ By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,  
 Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,  
 To hearken if his foes pursue him stall :  
 Anon their loud alarums he doth hear ;  
 And now his grief may be compared well  
 To one sore sick that hears the passing-bell.

‘ Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch  
 Turn, and return, indenting with the way ;  
 Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,  
 Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay :  
 For misery is trodden on by many,  
 And being low never relieved by any

‘ Lie quietly, and hear a little more ;  
 Nay, do not struggle, for thou shalt not rise :  
 To make thee hate the hunting of the boar,  
 Unlike myself thou hear'st me moralize,  
 Applying this to that, and so to so ;  
 For love can comment upon every woe.

'Where did I leave?' 'No matter where,' quoth he ;

'Leave me, and then the story aptly ends :  
'The night is spent.' 'Why, what of that?' quoth she.

'I am,' quoth he, 'expected of my friends ;  
'And now 't is dark, and going I shall fall.'  
'In night,' quoth she, 'desire sees best of all.

'But if thou fall, O ! then imagine this,  
The earth, in love with thee, thy footing trips,  
And all is but to rob thee of a kiss.  
Rich preys make true men thieves ; so do thy lips  
Make modest Dian cloudy and forlorn,  
Lest she should steal a kiss and die forsworn.

'Now of this dark night I perceive the reason :  
Cynthia for shame obscures her silver shine,  
'Till forging Nature be condemn'd of treason,  
For stealing moulds from heaven that were divine ;  
Wherein she framed thee in high heaven's  
despite,  
To shame the sun by day and her by night.

'And therefore hath she bribed the Destinies  
To cross the curious workmanship of nature,  
To mingle beauty with infirmities,  
And pure perfection with impure defeature ;  
Making it subject to the tyranny  
Of mad mischances and much misery ;

'As burning fevers, agues pale and faint,  
Life poisoning pestilence and frenzies wood,



The marrow-eating sickness, whose attaint  
 Disorder breeds by heating of the blood ;  
 Surfeits, imposthumes, grief, and damn'd despair,  
 Swear Nature's death for framing thee so fair.

' And not the least of all these maladies  
 But in one minute's fight brings beauty under :  
 Both favour, savour, hue, and qualities,  
 Whereat the impartial gazer late did wonder,  
 Are on the sudden wasted, thaw'd and done,  
 As mountain snow melts with the mid-day sun.

' Therefore, despite of fruitless chastity,  
 Love-lacking vestals and self loving nuns,  
 That on the earth would breed a scarcity,  
 And barren death of daughters and of sons,  
 Be prodigal the lamp that burns by night  
 Dries up his oil to lend the world his light.

' What is thy body but a swallowing grave,  
 Seeming to bury that posterity  
 Which by the rights of time thou needs must have,  
 If thou destroy them not in dark obscurity ?  
 If so, the world will hold thee in disdain,  
 Sith in thy pride so fair a hope is slain. •

So in thyself thyself art made away ;  
 A mischief worse than civil home bred strife,  
 Or theirs whose desperate hands themselves do slay,  
 Or butcher sire that reaves his son of life  
 Foul cankering rust the hidden treasure frets,  
 But gold that 's put to use more gold begets.'

' Nay then,' quoth Adon, ' you will fall again  
Into your idle over-handled theme ;  
The kiss I gave you is bestow'd in vain,  
And all in vain you strive against the stream ;  
For by this black-faced night, desire's foul nurse,  
Your treatise makes me like you worse and  
worse.

' If love have lent you twenty thousand tongues,  
And every tongue more moving than your own,  
Bewitching like the wanton mermaid's songs,  
Yet from mine ear the tempting tune is blown ;  
For know, my heart stands armed in mine ear,  
And will not let a false sound enter there ;

' Lest the deceiving harmony should run  
Into the quiet closure of my breast ;  
And then my little heart were quite undone,  
In his bedchamber to be barr'd of rest.  
No, lady, no ; my heart longs not to groan,  
But soundly sleeps, while now it sleeps alone.

' What have you urged that I cannot reprove  
The path is smooth that leadeth on to danger ;  
I hate not love, but your device in love,  
That lends embracements unto every stranger.  
You do it for increase : O strange excuse !  
When reason is the bayd to lust's abuse.

' Call it not love, for Love to heaven is fled,  
Since sweating Lust on earth usurp'd his name ;  
Under whose simple semblance he hath fed  
Upon fresh beauty, blotting it with blame ;

Which the hot tyrant stains and soon bereaves,  
As caterpillars do the tender leaves.

'Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,  
But Lust's effect is tempest after sun ;  
Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain,  
Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done.  
Love surfeits not, Lust like a glutton dies ;  
Love is all truth, Lust full of forged lies.

'More I could tell, but more I dare not say ;  
The text is old, the orator too green.  
Therefore, in sadness, now I will away ;  
My face is full of shame, my heart of teen :  
Mine ears, that to your wanton talk attended,  
Do burn themselves for having so offended.'

With this he breaketh from the sweet embrace  
Of those fair arms which bound him to her  
breast,  
And homeward through the dark laund runs  
apace ;  
Leaves Love upon her back deeply distress'd.  
Look, how a bright star shooteth from the sky,  
So glides he in the night from Venus' eye ;

Which after him she darts, as one on shore  
Gazing upon a late-embarked friend,  
Till the wild waves will have him seen no more,  
Whose ridges with the meeting clouds contend :  
So did the merciless and pitchy night  
Fold in the object that did feed her sight.

Whereat amazed, as one that unware  
 Hath dropp'd a precious jewel in the flood,  
 Or 'stonish'd as night-wanderers often are,  
 Their light blown out in some mistrustful wood ;  
 Even so confounded in the dark she lay,  
 Having lost the fair discovery of her way.

And now she beats her heart, whereat it groans,  
 That all the neighbour caves, as seeming troubled,  
 Make verbal repetition of her moans ;  
 Passion on passion deeply is redoubled :  
 'Ay me !' she cries, and twenty times 'Woe,  
 • woe !'  
 And twenty echoes twenty times cry so.

She marking them begins a wailing note,  
 And sings extemporally a woeful ditty ;  
 How love makes young men thrall and old men  
 • dote ;  
 How love is wise in folly, foolish-witty :  
 Her heavy anthem still concludes in woe,  
 And still the choir of echoes answer so.

Her song was tedious, and outwore the night,  
 For lovers' hours are long, though seeming short ;  
 If pleased themselves, others, they think, delight  
 In such-like circumstance, with such-like sport :  
 Their copious stories, oftentimes begun,  
 End without audience, and are never done.

For who hath she to spend the night withal,  
 But idle sounds resembling parasites,

Like shrill-tongued tapsters answering every call,  
Soothing the humour of fantastic wits ?

She says 'T is so : ' they answer all 'T is so ;'  
And would say after her, if she said 'No.'

Lo ! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,  
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,  
And wakes the morning, from whose silver  
breast

The sun ariseth in his majesty ;  
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,  
That cedar-tops and hills seem burnish'd gold.

Venus salutes him with this fair good-morrow :  
'O thou clear god, and patron of all light,  
From whom each lamp and shining star doth  
borrow

The beauteous influence that makes him bright,  
There lives a son that suck'd an earthly mother,  
May lend thee light, as thou dost lend to other.

This said, she hasteth to a myrtle grove,  
Musing the morning is so much o'erworn,  
And yet she hears no tidings of her love ;  
She hearkens for his hounds and for his horn :  
Anon she hears them chant it lustily,  
And all in haste she ceaseth to the cry.

And as she runs, the bushes in the way  
Some catch her by the neck, some kiss her face,  
Some twine about her thigh to make her stay :  
She wildly breaketh from their strict embrace,

Like a milch doe, whose swelling dugs do ache,  
Hasting to feed her fawn hid in some brake.

By this she hears the hounds are at a bay ;  
Whereat she starts, like one that spies an adder  
Wreathed up in fatal folds just in his way,  
The fear whereof doth make him shake and  
shudder ;  
Even so the timorous yelping of the hounds  
Appals her senses, and her spirit confounds.

For now she knows it is no gentle chase,  
But the blunt boar, rough bear, or lion proud,  
Because the cry remaineth in one place,  
Where fearfully the dogs exclaim aloud :  
Finding their enemy to be so curst,  
They all strain courtesy who shall cope him  
first.

This dismal cry rings sadly in her ear,  
Through which it enters to surprise her heart ;  
Who, overcome by doubt and bloodless fear,  
With cold-pale weakness numbs each feeling  
part ;  
Like soldiers, when their captain once doth  
yield,  
They basely fly and dare not stav the field.

Thus stands she in a trembling ecstasy,  
Till, cheering up her senses all dismay'd,  
She tells them 't is a causeless fantasy,  
And chuldish error, that they are afraid ;

Bids them leave quaking, bids them fear no  
 more :  
 And with that word she spied the hunted  
 boar,

Whose frothy mouth bepainted all with red,  
 Like milk and blood being mingled both together,  
 A second fear through all her sinews spread,  
 Which madly hurries her she knows not whither :  
 Thus way she runs, and now she will no further,  
 But back retires to rate the boar for murder.

A thousand spleens bear her a thousand ways,  
 She treads the path that she untreads again ;  
 Her more than haste is mated with delays,  
 Like the proceedings of a drunken brain,  
 Full of respects, yet nought at all respecting,  
 In hand with all things, nought at all effecting.

Here kennell'd in a brake she finds a hound,  
 And asks the weary cartiff for his master,  
 And there another licking of his wound,  
 'Gainst venom'd sores the only sovereign plaster ;  
 And here she meets another sadly scowling,  
 To whom she speaks, and he replies with howl-  
 ling.

When he hath ceased his ill-resounding noise,  
 Another flap-mouth'd mourner, black and grim,  
 Against the welkin volleys out his voice ;  
 Another and another answer him,  
 Clapping their proud tails to the ground below,  
 Shaking their scratch'd ears, bleeding as they go.

Look, how the world's poor people are amazed  
 At apparitions, signs, and prodigies,  
 Whereon with fearful eyes they long have gazed,  
 Infusing them with dreadful prophecies;  
 So she at these sad signs draws up her breath,  
 And sighing it again, exclaims on Death.

'Hard-favour'd tyrant, ugly, meagre, lean,  
 Hateful divorce of love,' thus chides she Death,  
 'Grim-grinning ghost, earth's worm, what dost  
 thou mean  
 To stifle beauty and to steal his breath,  
 Who when he lived, his breath and beauty set  
 Gloss on the rose, smell to the violet ?

'If he be dead, O no ! it cannot be,  
 Seeing his beauty, thou should'st strike at it ;  
 O yes ! it may ; thou hast no eyes to see,  
 But hatefully at random dost thou hit.  
 Thy mark is feeble age, but thy false dart  
 Mistakes that aim and cleaves an infant's heart.

'Had'st thou but bid *love* then he had spoke,  
 And hearing him thy *dart* had lost his power.  
 The Destinies will curse thee for this stroke ;  
 They bid thee crop a weed, thou pluck'st a flower.  
 Love's golden arrow at him should have fled,  
 And not Death's ebony dart, to strike him dead.

'Dost thou drink tears, that thou provokest such  
 weeping ?  
 That may a heavy groan advantage thee ?



Why hast thou cast into eternal sleeping  
 Those eyes that taught all other eyes to see ?  
 Now Nature cares not for thy mortal vigour,  
 Since her best work is ruin'd with thy rigour.

Here overcome, as one full of despair,  
 She vail'd her eyelids, who, like sluices, stopp'd  
 The crystal tide that from her two cheeks fair  
 In the sweet channel of her bosom dropp'd ;  
 But through the flood-gates breaks the silver  
 rain,  
 And with his strong course opens them again.

O ! how her eyes and tears did lend and borrow ;  
 Her eyes seen in the tears, tears in her eye ;  
 Both crystals, where they view'd each other'  
 sorrow,  
 Sorrow that friendly sighs sought still to dry ;  
 But like a stormy day, now wind, now rain,  
 Sighs dry her cheeks, tears make them wet again.

Variable passions throug her constant woe,  
 As striving who should best become her grief ;  
 All entertain'd, each passion labours so,  
 That every present sorrow seemeth chief,  
 But none is best ; then join they altogether,  
 Like many clouds consulting for foul weather.

By this, far off she hears some huntsman holla ;  
 A nurse's song ne'er pleased her babe so well :  
 The dire imagination she did follow  
 This sound of hope doth labour to expel ;

For now reviving joy bids her rejoice,  
And flatters her it is Adonis' voice.

Whereat her tears began to turn their tide,  
Being prison'd in her eye, like pearls in glass ;  
Yet sometimes falls an orient drop beside,  
Which her cheek melts, as scorning it should pass,  
To wash the foul face of the sluttish ground,  
Who is but drunken when she seemeth drown'd.

O hard-believing love ! how strange it seems  
Not to believe, and yet too credulous ;  
Thy weal and woe are both of them extremes ;  
Despair and hope make thee ridiculous :  
The one doth flatter thee in thoughts unlikely,  
In likely thoughts the other kills thee quickly.

Now she unweaves the web that she hath wrought,  
Adonis lives, and Death is not to blame ;  
It was not she that call'd him all to naught,  
Now she adds honours to his hateful name ;  
She clepes him king of graves, and grave for  
kings,  
Imperious supreme of all mortal things.

'No, no,' quoth she, 'sweet Death, I did but jest ;  
Yet pardon me I felt a kind of fear  
Whenas I met the boar, that blood-beast,  
Which knows no pity, but is still so  
Then, gentle shadow, truth I must confess,  
I rail'd on thee, fearing my love's decease.

'Tis not my fault : the boar provoked my tongue ;  
Be wreak'd on him, invisible commander ;

'Tis he, foul creature, that hath done thee wrong;  
I did but act, he's author of thy slander.

Grief hath two tongues, and never woman yet  
Could rule them both without ten women's wit.

Thus hoping that Adonis is alive,  
Her rash suspect she doth extenuate;  
And that his beauty may the better thrive,  
With Death she humbly doth insinuate;  
Tells him of trophies, statues, tombs, and stories  
His victories, his triumphs, and his glories.

' O Jove! quoth she, ' how much a fool was I  
To be of such a weak and silly mind  
To wail his death who lives and must not die'  
Till mutual overthrow of mortal kind;  
For he being dead, with him is beauty slain,  
And, beauty dead, black chaos comes again.

' Fie, fie, fond love! thou art so full of fear  
As one with treasure laden, hemm'd with thieves;  
Trifles, unwitnessed with eye or ear,  
Thy coward heart with false bethinking grieves.'  
Even at this word she hears a merry horn,  
Whereat she leaps that was but late forlorn.

As falcon to the lure, away she flies;  
The grass stoops not, she treads on it so light;  
And in her haste unfortunately spies  
The foul boar's conquest on her fair delight;  
Which seen, her eyes, as murder'd with the view,  
Like stars ashamed of day, themselves withdrew:

Or, as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,  
Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,  
And there, all smother'd up, in shade doth sit,  
Long after fearing to creep forth again ;  
So, at his bloody view, her eyes are fled  
Into the deep dark cabins of her head :

Where they resign their office and their light  
To the disposing of her troubled brain ;  
Who bids them still consort with ugly night,  
And never wound the heart with looks again ;  
Who, like a king perplexed in his throne,  
By their suggestion gives a deadly groan,

Whereat each tributary subject quakes ;  
As when the wind, imprison'd in the ground,  
Struggling for passage, earth's foundation shakes,  
Which with cold terror doth men's minds confound.  
This mutiny each part doth so surprise  
That from their dark beds once more leap her  
eyes ;

And, being open'd, threw unwilling light  
Upon the wide wound that the boar had trench'd  
In his soft flank ; whose wonted lily white  
With purple tears, that his wound wept, was  
drench'd :  
No flower was nigh, no grass, herb, leaf, or weed,  
But stole his blood and seem'd with him to  
bleed.

This solemn sympathy poor Venus noteth,  
Over one shoulder doth she hang her head,

Dumbly she passions, frantically she doteth ;  
 She thinks he could not die, he is not dead :  
 Her voice is stopp'd, her joints forget to bow,  
 Her eyes are mad that they have wept till now.

Upon his hurt she looks so steadfastly,  
 That her sight dazzling makes the wound seem  
 three ;  
 And then she reprehends her mangling eye,  
 That makes more gashes where no breach should  
 be :  
 His face seems twain, each several limb is  
 doubled ;  
 For oft the eye mistakes, the brain being  
 troubled.

' My tongue cannot express my grief for one,  
 And yet,' quoth she, ' behold two Adons dead !  
 My sighs are blown away, my salt tears gone,  
 Mine eyes are turn'd to fire, my heart to lead :  
 Heavy heart's lead, melt at mine eyes' red fire !  
 So shall I die by drops of hot desire.

' Alas ! poor world, what treasure hast thou lost ?  
 What face remains alive that's worth the viewing ?  
 Whose tongue is music now ? what canst thou  
 boast  
 Of things long since, or any thing ensuing ?  
 The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh and  
 trim ;  
 But true-sweet beauty lived and died with him.

' Bonnet nor veil henceforth no creature wear !  
 Nor sun nor wind will ever strive to kiss you :  
 Having no fair to lose, you need not fear ;  
 The sun doth scorn you, and the wind doth hiss  
 you :

But when Adonis lived, sun and sharp air  
 Lurk'd like two thieves, to rob him of his fair :

' And therefore would he put his bonnet on,  
 Under whose brim the gaudy sun would peep ;  
 The wind would blow it off, and, being gone,  
 Play with his locks : then would Adonis weep ;

\* And straight, in pity of his tender years,  
 They both would strive who first should dry  
 his tears.

' To see his face the lion walk'd along  
 Behind some hedge, because he would not fear  
 him ;

To recreate himself when he hath sung,  
 The tiger would be tame and gently hear him ;  
 If he had spoke, the wolf would leave his prey  
 And never fright the silly lamb that day.

' When he beheld his shadow in the brook,  
 The fishes spread on it their golden gills ;  
 When he was by, the birds such pleasure took,  
 That some would sing, some other in their bills  
 Would bring him mulberries and ripe-red  
 cherries ;

He fed them with his sight, they him with  
 berries.

‘ But this foul, grim, and urchin-snouted boar,  
 Whose downward eye still looketh for a grave,  
 Ne’er saw the beauteous livery that he wore ;  
 Witness the entertainment that he gave :  
     If he did see his face, why then I know  
     He thought to kiss him, and hath kill’d him so.

‘ ‘T is true, ’t is true ; thus was Adonis slain :  
 He ran upon the boar with his sharp spear,  
 Who did not whet his teeth at him again,  
 But by a kiss thought to persuade him there ;  
     And nuzzling in his flank, the loving swine  
     Sheathed unaware the tusk in his soft groin. .

‘ Had I been tooth’d like him, I must confess,  
 With kissing him I should have kill’d him first ;  
 But he is dead, and never did he bless  
 My youth with his ; the more am I accurst.’  
     With this she falleth in the place she stood,  
     And stains her face with his congealed blood.

She looks upon his lips, and they are pale ;  
 She takes him by the hand, and that is cold ;  
 She whispers in his ears a heavy tale,  
 As if they heard the woeful words she told ;  
     She lifts the coffer-lids that close his eyes,  
     Where, lo ! two lamps, burnt out, in darkness  
     lies ;

Two glasses, where herself herself beheld  
 A thousand times, and now no more reflect ;  
 Their virtue lost, wherein they late excell’d,  
 And every beauty robb’d of his effect :

'Wonder of time,' quoth she, 'this is my spite,  
That, thou being dead, the day should yet be  
light.

'Since thou art dead, lo! here I prophesy,  
Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend :  
It shall be waited on with jealousy,  
Find sweet beginning, but unsavoury end ;  
Ne'er settled equally, but high or low ;  
That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe.

'It shall be fickle, false, and full of fraud,  
Bvd and be blasted in a breathing-while ;  
The bottom poison, and the top o'erstraw'd  
With sweets that shall the truest sight beguile :  
The strongest body shall it make most weak,  
Strike the wise dumb and teach the fool to  
speak.

'It shall be sparing and too full of riot,  
Teaching decrepit age to tread the measures ;  
The staring ruffian shall it keep in quiet,  
Pluck down, the rich, enrich the poor with  
treasures ;  
It shall be raging mad, and silly mild,  
Make the young old, the old become a child

'It shall suspect where is no cause of fear ;  
It shall not fear where it should most mistrust ;  
It shall be merciful, and too severe,  
And most deceiving when it seems most just ;  
Perverse it shall be, where it shows most toward,  
Put fear to valour, courage to the coward.



‘It shall be cause of war and dire events,  
 And set dissension ’twixt the son and sire ;  
 Subject and servile to all discontents,  
 As dry combustious matter is to fire :  
 Sith in his prime Death doth my love destroy,  
 They that love best their loves shall not enjoy.’

By this, the boy that by her side lay kill’d  
 Was melted like a vapour from her sight,  
 And in his blood that on the ground lay spill’d,  
 A purple flower sprung up, chequer’d with white ;  
 Resembling well his pale cheeks, and the blood  
 Which in round drops upon their whiteness  
 stood.

She bows her head, the new sprung flower to  
 smell,  
 Comparing it to her Adonis’ breath,  
 And says within her bosom it shall dwell,  
 Since he himself is reft from her by death :  
 She crops the stalk, and in the breach appears  
 Green dropping sap, which she compares to  
 tears.

‘Poor flower,’ quoth she, ‘this was thy father’s  
 guise,  
 Sweet issue of a more sweet-smelling sire,  
 For every little grief to wet his eyes :  
 To grow unto himself was his desire,  
 And so ’t is thine ; but know, it is as good  
 To wither in my breast as in his blood.’

'Here was thy father's bed, here in my breast ;  
Thou art the next of blood, and 't is thy right :  
Lo ! in this hollow cradle take thy rest,  
My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and  
night :

There shall not be one minute in an hour  
Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's  
flower.'

Thus weary of the world, away she hies,  
And yokes her silver doves ; by whose swift aid  
Their mistress mounted through the empty skies  
In her light chariot quickly is convey'd ;  
Holding their course to Paphos, where their  
queen  
Means to immure herself and not be seen.



THE RAPE OF LUCRECE



# THE RAPE OF LUCRECE.

TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY  
WRIOTHESLY,  
EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON, AND BARON  
OF TICHFIELD.

*The love I dedicate to your lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous morety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is your; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.*

*Your lordship's in all duty,*

*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.*

## THE ARGUMENT.

*Lucius Tarquinius, for his excessive pride surnamed Superbus, after he had caused his own father-in-law Servius Tullius to be cruelly murdered,*

and, contrary to the Roman laws and customs, not requiring or staying for the people's suffrages, had possessed himself of the kingdom, went, accompanied with his sons and other noblemen of Rome, to besiege Ardea. During which siege the principal men of the army meeting one evening at the tent of Sextus Tarquinius, the king's son, in their discourses after supper every one commended the virtues of his own wife: among whom Collatinus extolled the incomparable chastity of his wife Lucretia. In that pleasant humour they all posted to Rome; and intending, by their secret and sudden arrival, to make trial of that which every one had before avouched, only Collatinus finds his wife, though it were late in the night, spinning among her maids: the other ladies were all found dancing and revelling, or in several disports. Whereupon the noblemen yielded Collatinus the victory, and his wife the fame. At that time Sextus Tarquinius being inflamed with Lucrece's beauty, yet smothering his passions for the present, departed with the rest back to the camp; from whence he shortly after privily withdrew himself, and was, according to his estate, royally entertained and lodged by Lucrece at Collatium. The same night he treacherously stealeth into her chamber, violently ravished her, and early in the morning speedeth away. Lucrece, in this lamentable plight, hastely dispatcheth messengers, one to Rome for her father, another to the camp for Collatine. They came, the one accompanied with Junius Brutus, the other with Publius Valerius; and finding Lucrece attired in mourning habit, demanded the cause of her sorrow. She, first taking

*an oath of them for her revenge, revealed the actor, and whole manner of his dealing, and withal suddenly stabbed herself. Which done, with one consent they all vowed to root out the whole hated family of the Tarquins; and bearing the dead body to Rome, Brutus acquainted the people with the doer and manner of the vile deed, with a bitter invective against the tyranny of the king: wherewith the people were so moved, that with one consent and a general acclamation the Tarquins were all exiled, and the state government changed from kings to consuls.*

From the besieged Ardea all in post,  
 Borne by the trustless wings of false desire,  
 Lust-breathed Tarquin leaves the Roman host,  
 And to Collatium bears the lightless fire  
 Which, in pale embers hid, lurks to aspire,  
 And girdle with embracing flames the waist  
 Of Collatine's fair love, Lucrece the chaste.

Haply that name of 'chaste' unhappily set  
 This bateless edge on his keen appetite;  
 When Collatine unwisely did not let  
 To praise the clear unmatched red and white  
 Which triumph'd in that sky of his delight,  
 Where mortal stars, as bright as heaven's  
 beauties,  
 With pure aspects did him peculiar duties.

For he the night before, in Tarquin's tent,  
 Unlock'd the treasure of his happy state;  
 What priceless wealth the heavens had him lent



In the possession of his beauteous mate ;  
 Reckoning his fortune at such high-proud rate,  
 That kings might be espoused to more fame,  
 But king nor peer to such a peerless dame.

O happiness enjoy'd but of a few !  
 And, if possess'd, as soon decay'd and done  
 As is the morning's silver-melting dew  
 Against the golden splendour of the sun ;  
 An expired date, cancell'd ere well begun :  
 Honour and beauty, in the owner's arms,  
 Are weakly fortress'd from a world of harms

Beauty itself doth of itself persuade  
 The eyes of men without an orator ;  
 What needeth then apologies be made  
 To set forth that which is so singular ?  
 Or why is Collatine the publisher  
 Of that rich jewel he should keep unknown  
 From thievish ears, because it is his own ?

Perchance his boast of Lucrece' sovereignty  
 Suggested this proud issue of a king ;  
 For by our ears our hearts oft tainted be :  
 Perchance that envy of so rich a thing,  
 Braving compare, disdainfully did sting  
 His high-pitch'd thoughts, that meaner men  
 should vaunt  
 That golden hap which their superiors want.

But some untimely thought did instigate  
 His all-timeless speed, if none of those :  
 His honour, his affairs, his friends, his state.

Neglected all, with swift intent he goes  
 To quench the coal which in his liver glows.  
 O! rash false heat, wrapp'd in repentant cold,  
 Thy hasty spring still blasts, and ne'er grows old.

When at Collatium this false lord arrived,  
 Well was he welcomed by the Roman dame,  
 Within whose face beauty and virtue strived  
 Which of them both should underprop her fame :  
 When virtue bragg'd, beauty would blush for  
 shame ;

When beauty boasted blushes, in despite  
 Virtue would stain that o'er with silver white.

But beauty, in that white intituled,  
 From Venus' doves doth challenge that fair field ;  
 Then virtue claims from beauty beauty's red,  
 Which virtue gave the golden age to gold  
 Their silver cheeks, and call'd it then their shield ;  
 Teaching them thus to use it in the fight,  
 When shame assail'd, the red should fence the  
 white.

This heraldry in Lucrece' face was seen,  
 Argued by beauty's red and virtue's white :  
 Of either's colour was the other queen,  
 Proving from world's minority their right :  
 Yet their ambition makes them still to fight ;  
 The sovereignty of either being so great,  
 That oft they interchange each other's seat.

This silent war of lilies and of roses,  
 Which Tarquin view'd in her fair face's field,

In their pure ranks his traitor eye encloses ;  
 Where, lest between them both it should be kill'd,  
 The coward captive vanquished doth yield  
 To those two armies that would let him go,  
 Rather than triumph in so false a foe.

Now thinks he that her husband's shallow tongue,  
 The niggard prodigal that praised her so,  
 In that high task hath done her beauty wrong,  
 Which far exceeds his barren skill to show :  
 Therefore that praise which Collatine doth owe  
 Enchanted Tarquin answers with surmise,  
 In silent wonder of still-gazing eyes.

This earthly saint, adored by this devil,  
 Little suspecteth the false worshipper ;  
 For unstain'd thoughts do seldom dream on evil,  
 Birds never limed no secret bushes fear :  
 So guiltless she securely gives good cheer  
 And reverent welcome to her princely guest,  
 Whose inward ill no outward harm express'd :

For that he colour'd with his high estate,  
 Hiding base sin in plaits of majesty ;  
 That nothing in him seem'd inordinate,  
 Save sometime too much wonder of his eye,  
 Which, having all, all could not satisfy ;  
 But, poorly rich, so wanteth in his store,  
 That, cloy'd with much, he pineth still for more.

But she, that never coped with stranger eyes,  
 Could pick no meaning from their parling looks,

Nor read the subtle-shining secrecies  
 Writ in the glassy margents of such books.  
 She touch'd no unknown baits, nor fear'd no  
 hooks ;  
 Nor could she moralize his wanton sight,  
 More than his eyes were open'd to the light.

He stories to her ears her husband's fame,  
 Won in the fields of fruitful Italy ;  
 And decks with praises Collatine's high name,  
 Made glorious by his manly chivalry  
 With bruised arms and wreaths of victory :  
 • Her joy with heaved-up hand she doth express,  
 And, wordless, so greets heaven for his success.

Far from the purpose of his coming thither,  
 He makes excuses for his being there .  
 No cloudy show of stormy blustering weather  
 • Doth yet in his fair welkin once appear ;  
 Till sable Night, mother of Dread and Fear,  
 Upon the world dim darkness doth display,  
 And in her vaulty prison stows the Day.

For then is Tarquin brought unto his bed,  
 Intending weariness with heavy spright ;  
 For after supper long he questioned  
 With modest Lucrece, and wore out the night ;  
 Now leaden slumber with life's strength doth  
 fight,  
 And every one to rest themselves betake,  
 Save thieves, and cares, and troubled minds,  
 that wake.

As one of which doth Tarquin lie revolving  
 The sundry dangers of his will's obtaining ;  
 Yet ever to obtain his will resolving,  
 Though weak-built hopes persuade him to abstain-  
 ing :

Despair to gain doth traffic oft for gaining ;  
 And when great treasure is the meed proposed,  
 Though death be adjunct, there's no death  
 supposed.

Those that much covet are with gain so fond,  
 That what they have not, that which they possess  
 They scatter and unloose it from their bond,  
 And so, by hoping more, they have but less,  
 Or, gaining more, the profit of excess  
 Is but to surfeit, and such griefs sustain,  
 That they prove bankrupt in this poor-rich gain.

The aim of all is but to nurse the life  
 With honour, wealth, and ease, in waning age ;  
 And in this aim there is such thwarting strife,  
 That one for all, or all for one we gage ;  
 As life for honour in fell battle's rage ;  
 Honour for wealth ; and oft that wealth doth  
 cost  
 The death of all, and all together lost.

So that in venturing ill we leave to be  
 The things we are for that which we expect ;  
 And this ambitious foul infirmity,  
 In having much, torments us with defect  
 Of that we have : so then we do neglect  
 The thing we have ; and, all for want of wit,  
 Make something nothing by augmenting it.

Such hazard now must doting Tarquin make,  
 Pawning his honour to obtain his lust,  
 And for himself himself he must forsake .  
 Then where is truth, if there be no self-trust ?  
 When shall he think to find a stranger just,  
 When he himself himself confounds, betrays  
 To slandrous tongues and wretched hateful  
 days ?

Now stole upon the time the dead of night,  
 When heavy sleep had closed up mortal eyes ;  
 No comfortable star did lend his light,  
 No noise but owls' and wolves' death-boding cries ;  
 Now serves the season that they may surprise  
 The silly lambs , pure thoughts are dead and  
 still,  
 While lust and murder wake to stain and kill.

And now this lustful lord leap'd from his bed,  
 Throwing his mantle rudely o'er his arm ;  
 Is madly toss'd between desire and dead ,  
 Th' one sweetly flatters, th' other feareth harm ;  
 But honest fear, bewitch'd with lust's foul chain,  
 Doth too<sup>o</sup> too oft betake him to retire,  
 Beaten away by brain-sick rude desire

His falchion on a flint he softly smiteth,  
 That from the cold stones sparks of fire do fly ,  
 Whereat a waxen torch forthwith he lighteth,  
 Which must be lode-star to his lustful eye ,  
 And to the flame thus speaks advisedly

'As from this cold flint I enforced this fire,  
So Lucrece must I force to my desire.'

Here pale with fear he doth premeditate  
The dangers of his loathsome enterprise,  
And in his inward mind he doth debate  
What following sorrow may on this arise :  
Then looking scornfully, he doth despise  
His naked armour of still-slaughter'd lust,  
And justly thus controls his thoughts unjust :

'Fair torch, burn out thy light, and lend it not  
To darken her whose light excelleth thine ;  
And die, unhallow'd thoughts, before you blot  
With your uncleanness that which is divine ;  
Giver pure incense to so pure a shrine :  
Let fair humanity abhor the deed  
That spots and stains love's modest snow-white  
weed.

'O shame to knighthood and to shining arms !  
O foul dishonour to my household's grave !  
O impious act, including all foul harms !  
A martial man to be soft fancy's slave !  
True valour still a true respect should have ;  
Then my digression is so vile, so base,  
That it will live engraven in my face.

'Yea, though I die, the scandal will survive,  
And be an eye-sore in my golden coat ;  
Some loathsome dash the herald will contrive,  
To cipher me how fondly I did dote ;  
That my posterity, shamed with the note,

Shall curse my bones, and hold it for no sin  
To wish that I their father had not been.

‘What win I if I gain the thing I seek ?  
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy.  
Who buys a minute’s mirth to wail a week ?  
Or sells eternity to get a toy ?  
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy ?  
Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown,  
Would with the sceptre straight be stricken  
down ?

‘If Collatinus dream of my intent,  
Will he not wake, and in a desperate rage  
Post hither, this vile purpose to prevent ?  
This siege that hath engirt his marriage,  
This blur to youth, this sorrow to the sage,  
This dying virtue, this surviving shame,  
Whose crime will bear an ever-during blame ?

‘O ! what excuse can my invention make,  
When thou shalt charge me with so black a deed ?  
Will not my tongue be mute, my frail joints shake,  
Mine eyes forgo their light, my false heart bleed ?  
The guilt being great, the fear doth still exceed ;  
And extreme fear can neither fight nor fly,  
But coward-like with trembling terror die.

‘Had Collatinus kill’d my son or sire,  
Or lain in ambush to betray my life,  
Or were he not my dear friend, this desire  
Might have excuse to work upon his wife,  
As in revenge or quittal of such strife :



But as he is my kinsman, my dear friend,  
The shame and fault finds no excuse nor end.

'Shameful it is ; ay, if the fact be known :  
Hateful it is ; there is no hate in loving :  
I'll beg her love ; but she is not her own :  
The worst is but denial and reproving :  
My will is strong, past reason's weak removing.  
Who fears a sentence, or an old man's saw,  
Shall by a painted cloth be kept in awe.'

Thus, graceless, holds he disputation  
'Tween frozen conscience and hot-burning will,  
And with good thoughts makes dispensation,  
Uproving the worser sense for vantage still ;  
Which in a moment doth confound and kill  
All pure effects, and doth so far proceed,  
That what is vile shows like a virtuous deed.

Quoth he, 'She took me kindly by the hand,  
And gazed for tidings in my eager eyes,  
Fearing some hard news from the war-like band,  
Where her beloved Collatinus lies .  
O ! how her fear did make her colour rise :  
First red as roses that on lawn we lay,  
Then white as lawn, the roses took away.

'And how her hand, in my hand being lock'd,  
Forced it to tremble with her loyal fear !  
Which struck her sad, and then it faster rock'd  
Until her husband's welfare she did hear ;  
Whereat she smiled with so sweet a cheer,  
That had Narcissus seen her as she stood,  
Self-love had never drown'd him in the flood,

'Why hunt I then for colour or excuses?  
 All orators are dumb when beauty pleadeth;  
 Poor wretches have remorse in poor abuses;  
 Love thrives not in the heart that shadows  
 dreadeth,

Affection is my captain, and he leadeth;  
 And when his gaudy banner is display'd,  
 The coward fights and will not be dismay'd

'Then, childish fear, avaunt! debating, die!  
 Respect and reason, wait on wrinkled age!  
 My heart shall never countermand mine eye:  
 Sad pause and deep regard beseem the sage;  
 My part is youth, and beats these from the sage  
 Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize,  
 Then who fears sinking where such treasure  
 lies?'

As corn o'ergrown by weeds, so heedful fear  
 Is almost choked by unresisted lust  
 Away he steals with open listening ear,  
 Full of foul hope and full of fond mistrust;  
 Both which, as servitors to the unjust,  
 So cross him with their opposite persuasion,  
 That now he vows a league, and now invasion

Within his thought her heavenly image sits,  
 And in the self-same seat sits Collatine  
 That eye which looks on her confounds his wits,  
 That eye which him beholds, as more divine,  
 Unto a view so false will not incline.

But with a pure appeal seeks to the heart,  
Which once corrupted takes the worsèr part ;

And therein heartens up his servile powers,  
Who, flatter'd by their leader's jocund show,<sup>7</sup>  
Stuff up his lust, as minutes fill up hours ;  
And as their captain, so their pride doth grow,  
Paying more slavish tribute than they owe.  
By reprobate desire thus madly led,  
The Roman lord marcheth to Lucrece' bed.

The locks between her chamber and his will,  
Each one by him enforced, retires his ward ;  
But as they open they all rate his ill,  
Which drives the creeping thief to some regard :  
The threshold grates the doer to have him heard :  
Night-wandering weasels shriek to see him  
there ;  
They fright him, yet he still pursues his fear.

As each unwilling portal yields him way,  
Through little vents and crannies of the place  
The wind wars with his torch to make him stay,  
And blows the smoke of it into his face,  
Extinguishing his conduct in this case ;  
But his hot heart, which fond desire doth scorch,  
Puffs forth another wind that fires the torch :

And being lighted, by the light he spies  
Lucretia's glove, wherein her needle sticks :  
He takes it from the rushes where it lies,  
And griping it, the needl his finger pricks ;  
As who should say, ' This glove to wanton tricks .

Is not inured ; return again in haste ;  
Thou see'st our mistress' ornaments are chaste.'

But all these poor forbiddings could not stay him ;  
He in the worst sense construes their denial :  
The doors, the wind, the glove, that did delay him,  
He takes for accidental things of trial ;  
Or as those bars which stop the hourly dial,  
Who with a ling'ring stay his course doth let,  
Till every minute pays the hour his debt.

'So, so,' quoth he, 'these lets attend the time,  
Like little frosts that sometime threat the spring,  
To add a more rejoicing to the prime,  
And give the sneaped birds more cause to sing.  
Pain pays the income of each precious thing ;  
Huge rocks, high winds, strong pirates, shelves  
and sands,  
The merchant fears, ere rich at home he lands.'

Now is he come unto the chamber door,  
That shuts him from the heaven of his thought,  
Which with a yielding latch, and with no more,  
Hath barr'd him from the blessed thing he sought.  
So from himself impiety hath wrought,  
That for his prey to pray he doth begin,  
As if the heavens should countenance his sin.

But in the midst of his unfruitful prayer,  
Having solicited the eternal power  
That his foul thoughts might compass his fair fair,  
And they would stand auspicious to the hour,  
Even there he starts : quoth he, 'I must deflower :

The powers to whom I pray abhor this fact,  
How can they then assist me in the act ?

‘ Then Love and Fortune be my gods, my guide !  
My will is back’d with resolution :  
Thoughts are but dreams till their effects be tried ;  
The blackest sin is clear’d with absolution ;  
Against love’s fire fear’s frost hath dissolution.  
The eye of heaven is out, and misty night  
Covers the shame that follows sweet delight.’

This said, his guilty hand pluck’d up the latch,  
And with his knee the door he opens wide.  
The dove sleeps fast that this night-owl will catch :  
Thus treason works ere traitors be espied.  
Who sees the lurking serpent steps aside ;  
But she, sound sleeping, fearing no such thing,  
Lies at the mercy of his mortal sting.

Into the chamber wickedly he stalks,  
And gazeth on her yet unstained bed.  
The curtains being close, about he walks,  
Rolling his greedy eyeballs in his head :  
By their high treason is his heart misled ;  
Which gives the watch-word to his hand full  
soon,  
To draw the cloud that hides the silver moon.

Look, as the fair and fiery-pointed sun,  
Rushing from forth a cloud, bereaves our sight ;  
Even so, the curtain drawn, his eyes begun  
To wink, being blinded with a greater light :  
Whether it is that she reflects so bright,

That dazzleth them, or else some shame supposed,  
 But blind they are, and keep themselves enclosed.

O ! had they in that darksome prison died,  
 Then had they seen the period of their ill ;  
 Then Collatine again, by Lucrece' side,  
 In his clear bed might have reposed still :  
 But they must ope, this blessed league to kill,  
 And holy-thoughted Lucrece to their sight  
 Must sell her joy, her life, her world's delight.

Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under,  
 Cozening the pillow of a lawful kiss ;  
 Who, therefore angry, seems to part in sunder,  
 Swelling on either side to want his bliss ;  
 Between whose hills her head entombed is :  
 Where, like a virtuous monument, she lies,  
 To be admired of lewd unhallow'd eyes.

Without the bed her other fair hand was,  
 On the green coverlet ; whose perfect white  
 Show'd like an April daisy on the grass,  
 With pearly sweat, resembling dew of night.  
 Her eyes, like marigolds, had sheathed their light,  
 And canopied in darkness sweetly lay,  
 Till they might open to adorn the day.

Her hair, like golden threads, play'd with her  
 breath ;  
 O modest wantons ! wanton modesty !  
 Showing life's triumph in the map of death,

And death's dim look in life's mortality ;  
 Each in her sleep themselves so beautify,  
 As if between them twain there were no strife,  
 But that life lived in death, and death in life.

Her breasts, like ivory globes circled with blue,  
 A pair of maiden worlds unconquered,  
 Save of their lord no bearing yoke they knew,  
 And him by oath they truly honoured.  
 These worlds in Tarquon new ambition bred ;  
 Who, like a foul usurper, went about  
 From this fair throne to heave the owner out.

What could he see but mightily he noted ?  
 What did he note but strongly he desired ?  
 What he beheld, on that he firmly doted,  
 And in his will his wilful eye he tired.  
 With more than admiration he admired  
 Her azure veins, her alabaster skin,  
 Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin.

As the grim lion fawneth o'er his prey,  
 Sharp hunger by the conquest satisfied,  
 So o'er this sleeping soul doth Tarquin stay,  
 His rage of lust by gazing qualified ;  
 Slack'd, not suppress'd ; for standing by her side,  
 His eye, which late this muti<sup>r</sup> restrains,  
 Unto a greater uproar tempts his veins :

And they, like straggling slaves for pillage fighting,  
 Obdurate vassals fell exploits effecting,  
 In bloody death and ravishment delighting,  
 Nor children's tears nor mothers' groans respecting.

Swell in their pride, the onset still expecting :  
 Anon his beating heart, alarm striking,  
 Gives the hot charge and bids them do their  
 liking.

His drumming heart cheers up his burning eye,  
 His eye commends the leading to his hand ;  
 His hand, as proud of such a dignity,  
 Smoking with pride, march'd on to make his  
 stand

On her bare breast, the heart of all her land ;  
 Whose ranks of blue veins, as his hand did  
 scale,  
 Left their round turrets destitute and pale.

They, mustering to the quiet cabinet  
 Where their dear governess and lady lies,  
 Do tell her she is dreadfully beset,  
 And fright her with confusion of their cries :  
 She, much amazed, breaks ope her lock'd-up eyes,  
 Who, peeping forth this tumult to behold,  
 Are by his flaming torch dumm'd and controll'd.

Imagine her as one in dead of night  
 From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking,  
 That thinks she hath beheld some ghastly sprite,  
 Whose grim aspect sets every joint a-shaking ;  
 What terror 't is ! but she, in worsè taking,  
 From sleep disturbed, heedfully doth view  
 The sight which makes supposed terror true.

Wrapp'd and confounded in a thousand fears,  
 Like to a new-kill'd bird she trembling lies ;



She dares not look ; yet, winking, there appears  
 Quick-shifting anticks, ugly in her eyes :  
 Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries ;  
 Who, angry that the eyes fly from their lights,  
 In darkness daunts them with more dreadful  
 sights.

His hand, that yet remains upon her breast,  
 Rude ram to batter such an ivory wall !  
 May feel her heart, poor citizen, distress'd,  
 Wounding itself to death, rise up and fall,  
 Beating her bulk, that his hand shakes withal.  
 This moves in him more rage and lesser pity,  
 To make the breach and enter this sweet city.

First, like a trumpet, doth his tongue begin  
 To sound a parley to his heartless foe ;  
 Who o'er the white sheet peers her whiter chin,  
 The reason of this rash alarm to know,  
 Which he by dumb demeanour seeks to show ;  
 But she with vehement prayers urgeth still,  
 Under what colour he commits this ill.

Thus he replies : ' The colour in thy face,  
 That even for anger makes the lily pale,  
 And the red rose blush at her own disgrace,  
 Shall plead for me and tell my loving tale ;  
 Under that colour as I come to scale  
 Thy never-conquer'd fort ; the fault is thine,  
 For those thine eyes betray thee unto mine.

' Thus I forestall thee, if thou mean to chide :  
 Thy beauty hath ensnar'd thee to this night,  
 Where thou with patience must my will abide,

My will that marks thee for my earth's delight,  
 Which I to conquer sought with all my might ;  
 But as reproof and reason beat it dead,  
 By thy bright beauty was it newly bred.

' I see what crosses my attempt will bring ;  
 I know what thorns the growing rose defends ;  
 I think the honey guarded with a sting ;  
 All this, beforehand, counsel comprehends :  
 But will is deaf and hears no heedful friends ;  
 Only he hath an eye to gaze on beauty,  
 And dotes on what he looks, 'gainst law or duty.

' I have debated, even in my soul,  
 What wrong, what shame, what sorrow I shall  
 breed ;  
 But nothing can affection's course control,  
 Or stop the headlong fury of his speed.  
 I know repentant tears ensue the deed,  
 Reproach, disdain, and deadly enmity ;  
 Yet strive I to embrace mine infamy.'

This said, he shakes aloft his Roman blade,  
 Which like a falcon towering in the skies,  
 Coucheth the fowl below with his wings' shade,  
 Whose crooked beak threatens if he mount he dies :  
 So under his insulting falchion lies  
 Harmless Lucretia, marking what he tells  
 With trembling fear, as fowl hear falcon's bells.

' Lucrece,' quoth he, ' this night I must enjoy  
 thee :  
 If thou deny, then force must work my way,

For in thy bed I purpose to destroy thee :  
 That done, some worthless slave of thine I'll slay,  
 To kill thine honour with thy life's decay ;  
 And in thy dead arms do I mean to place him,  
 Swearing I slew him, seeing thee embrace him.

' So thy surviving husband shall remain  
 The scornful mark of every open eye ;  
 Thy kinsmen hang their heads at this disdain,  
 Thy issue blurr'd with nameless bastardy :  
 And thou, the author of their obloquy,  
 Shalt have thy trespass cited up in rhymes,  
 And sung by children in succeeding times.

' But if thou yield, I rest thy secret friend :  
 The fault unknown is as a thought unacted ;  
 A little harm done to a great good end  
 For lawful policy remains enacted.  
 The poisonous simple sometimes is compacted  
 In a pure compound ; being so applied,  
 His venom in effect is purified.

' Then for thy husband and thy children's sake,  
 Tender my suit : bequeath not to their lot  
 The shame that from them no device can take,  
 The blemish that will never be forgot ;  
 Worse than a skivish wipe or birth-hour's blot :  
 For marks descried in men's nativity  
 Are nature's faults, not their own infamy.'

Here with a cockatrice' dead-killing eye  
 He rouseth up himself and makes a pause ;  
 While she, the picture of pure piety,

Like a white hind under the gripe's sharp claws,  
 Pleads in a wilderness where are no laws,  
 To the rough beast that knows no gentle right,  
 Nor aught obeys but his foul appetite.

But when a black-faced cloud the world doth  
 threat

In his dim mist the aspiring mountains hiding,  
 From earth's dark womb some gentle gust doth  
 get,

Which blows these pitchy vapours from their  
 bidding,

Hindering their present fall by this dividing ;

So his unhallow'd haste her words delays,  
 And moody Pluto winks while Orpheus-plays.

Yet, foul night-waking cat, he doth but dally,  
 While in his hold-fast foot the weak mouse  
 panteth :

Her sad behaviour feeds his vulture folly,

A swallowing gulf that even in plenty wanteth :

His ear her prayers admits, but his heart granteth

No penetrable entrance to her plaining :

Tears harden lust though marble wear with  
 raining.

Her pity-pleading eyes are sadly fix'd

In the remorseless wrinkles of his face ;

Her modest eloquence with sighs is mix'd,

Which to her oratory adds more grace.

She puts the period often from his place ;

And midst the sentence so her accent breaks,

That twice she doth begin ere once she speaks

She conjures him by high almighty Jove,  
 By knighthood, gentry, and sweet friendship's oath,  
 By her untimely tears, her husband's love,  
 By holy human law, and common troth,  
 By heaven and earth, and all the power of both,  
 That to his borrow'd bed he make retire,  
 And stoop to honour, not to foul desire.

Quoth she, 'Reward not hospitality  
 With such black payment as thou hast pretended ;  
 Mud not the fountain that gave drink to thee ;  
 Mar not the thing that cannot be amended ;  
 End thy ill aim before thy shoot be ended ;  
 He is no woodman that doth bend his bow  
 To strike a poor unseasonable doe.

' My husband is thy friend, for his sake spare me ;  
 Thyself art mighty, for thine own sake leave me ;  
 Myself a weakling, do not then ensnare me ;  
 Thou look'st not like deceit, do not deceive me,  
 My sighs, like whirlwinds, labour hence to heave  
 thee.

If ever man were moved with woman's moans,  
 Be moved with my tears, my sighs, my groans :

' All which together, like a troubled ocean,  
 Beat at thy rocky and wreck-threatening heart,  
 To soften it with ~~their~~ continual motion ;  
 For stones dissolved to water do convert.  
 O ! if no harder than a stone thou art,  
 Melt at my tears and be compassionate ;  
 Soft pity enters at an iron gate.

' In Tarquin's likeness I did entertain thee ;  
 Hast thou put on his shape to do him shame ?  
 To all the host of heaven I complain me,  
 Thou wrong'st his honour, wound'st his princely  
 name :

Thou art not what thou seem'st ; and if the same,  
 Thou seem'st not what thou art, a god, a king ;  
 For kings like gods should govern every thing.

' How will thy shame be seeded in thine age,  
 When thus thy vices bud before thy spring !  
 If in thy hope thou darest do such outrage,  
 What darest thou not when once thou art a king ?  
 O ! be remember'd ; no outrageous thing  
 From vassal actors can be wiped away ;  
 Then kings' misdeeds cannot be hid in clay.

' This deed will make thee only loved for fear ;  
 But happy monarchs still are fear'd for love :  
 With foul offenders thou perforce must bear,  
 When they in thee the like offences prove :  
 If but for fear of this, thy will remove ;  
 For princes are the glass, the school, the book,  
 Where subjects' eyes do learn, do read, do look.

' And wilt thou be the school where lust shall  
 learn ?  
 Must he in thee read lectures of such shame ?  
 Wilt thou be glass wherein it shall discern  
 Authority for sin, warrant for blame,  
 To privilege dishonour in thy name ?  
 Thou back'st reproach against long-living laud,  
 And makest fair reputation but a bawd.

‘ Hast thou command ! by him that gave it thee,  
 From a pure heart command thy rebel will :  
 Draw not thy sword to guard iniquity,  
 For it was lent thee all that brood to kill,  
 Thy princely office how canst thou fulfil,  
 When, pattern'd by thy fault, fowl sin may say,  
 He learn'd to sin, and thou didst teach the way ?

‘ Think but how vile a spectacle it were,  
 To view thy present trespass in another.  
 Men's faults do seldom to themselves appear ;  
 Their own transgressions partially they smother :  
 This guilt would seem death-worthy in thy brother.  
 O ! how are they wrapp'd in with infamies  
 That from their own misdeeds askance their eyes.

‘ To thee, to thee, my heav'd-up hands appeal,  
 Not to seducing lust, thy rash reliev ;  
 I sue for exiled majesty's repeal ;  
 Let him return, and flattering thoughts retire :  
 His true respect will prison false desire,  
 And wipe the dim mist from thy doting eyne,  
 That thou shalt see thy state and pity mine.’

‘ Have done,’ quoth he ; ‘ my uncontrolled tide  
 Turns not, but swells the higher by this let.  
 Small lights are soon blown out, huge fires abide,  
 And with the wind as greater fury fret :  
 The petty streams that pay a daily debt  
 To their salt sovereign, with their fresh falls  
 haste  
 Add to his flow, but alter not his taste.’

'Thou art,' quoth she, 'a sea, a sovereign king ;  
 And, lo ! there falls into thy boundless flood  
 Black lust, dishonour, shame, misgoverning,  
 Who seek to stain the ocean of thy blood.  
 If all these petty ills shall change thy good,  
 Thy sea within a puddle's womb is hearsed,  
 And not the puddle in thy sea dispersed.

' So shall these slaves be king, and thou their slave ;  
 Thou nobly base, they basely dignified ;  
 Thou their fair life, and they thy fouler grave ;  
 Thou loathed in their shame, they in thy pride :  
 The lesser thing should not the greater hide ;  
 The cedar stoops not to the base shrub's foot,  
 But low shrubs wither at the cedar's root.

' So let thy thoughts, low vassals to thy state'—  
 ' No more,' quoth he ; ' by heaven, I will not hear  
 thee :

Yield to my love ; if not, enforced hate,  
 Instead of love's coy touch, shall rudely tear thee ;  
 That done, despitefully I mean to bear thee  
 Unto the base bed of some rascal groom,  
 To be thy partner in this shameful doom.'

This said, he sets his foot upon the light,  
 For light and lust are deadly enemies .  
 Shame folded up in blind concealing night,  
 When most unseen, then most doth tyrannize.  
 The wolf hath seized his prey, the poor lamb cries ;  
 Till with her own white fleece her voice  
 controll'd  
 Entombs her outcry in her lips' sweet fold :



For with the nightly linen that she wears  
 He pens her piteous clamours in her hair,  
 Cooling his hot face in the chastest tears  
 That ever modest eyes with sorrow shed.  
 O ! that prone lust should stain so pure a bed :  
 The spots whereof could weeping purify,  
 Her tears should drop on them perpetually.

But she hath lost a dearer thing than life,  
 And he hath won what he would lose again ;  
 This forced league doth force a further strife ;  
 This momentary joy breeds months of pain ;  
 This hot desire converts to cold disdain :  
 Pure chastity is rifled of her store,  
 And Lust, the thief, far poorer than before.

Look ! as the full-fed hound or gorged hawk,  
 Unapt for tender smell or speedy flight,  
 Make slow pursuit, or altogether balk  
 The prey wherein by nature they delight ;  
 So surfeit-taking Tarquin fares this night :  
 His taste delicious, in digestion souring,  
 Devours his will, that lived by foul devouring.

O ! deeper sin than bottomless conceit  
 Can comprehend in still imagination ;  
 Drunken Desire must vomit his receipt,  
 Ere he can see his own abomination.  
 While Lust is in his pride, no exclamation  
 Can curb his heat or rein his rash desire,  
 Till like a jade Self-will himself doth tire.

And then with lank and lean discolour'd cheek,

With heavy eye, knit brow, and strengthless pace,  
 Feeble Desire, all recant, poor, and meek,  
 Like to a bankrupt beggar wails his case :  
 The flesh being proud, Desire doth fight with  
 Grace,

For there it revels ; and when that decays,  
 The guilty rebel for remission prays.

So fares it with this faultful lord of Rome,  
 Who this accomplishment so hotly chased ;  
 For now against himself he sounds this doom,  
 That through the length of tunces he stands  
 • disgraced

Besides, his soul's fair temple is defaced ;  
 To whose weak ruins muster troops of cares,  
 To ask the spotted princess how she fares.

She says, her subjects with foul insurrection  
 Have batter'd down her consecrated wall,  
 And by their mortal fault brought in subjection  
 Her immortality, and made her thral  
 To living death and pain perpetual

Which in her prescience she controll'd still,  
 But her foresight could not forestall their will.

Even in this thought through the dark night he  
 stealeth,

A captive victor that hath lost in gain ;  
 Bearing away the wound that nothing healeth,  
 The scar that will despite of cure remain ,  
 Leaving his spoil perplex'd in greater pain.

She bears the load of rust he left behind,  
 And he the burden of a guilty mind.

He like a thievish dog creeps sadly thence,  
 She like a wearied lamb lies panting there ;  
 He scowls and hates himself for his offence,  
 She desperate with her nails her flesh doth tear ;  
 He faintly flies, sweating with guilty fear,  
     She stays, exclaiming on the direful night ;  
     He runs, and chides his vanish'd, loathed delight.

He thence departs a heavy convertite,  
 She there remains a hopeless castaway ;  
 He in his speed looks for the morning light,  
 She prays she never may behold the day ;  
 'For day,' quoth she, 'night's scapes doth open lay,  
     And my true eyes have never practised how  
     To cloak offences with a cunning brow.

'They think not but that every eye can see  
 The same disgrace which they themselves behold ;  
 And therefore would they still in darkness be,  
 To have their unseen sin remain untold ;  
 For they their guilt with weeping will unfold,  
     And grave, like water that doth eat in steel,  
     Upon my cheeks what helpless shame I feel.'

Here she exclaims against repose and rest,  
 And bids her eyes hereafter still be blind.  
 She wakes her heart by beating on her breast,  
 And bids it leap from thence where it may find  
 Some purer chest to close so pure a mind.  
     Frantic with grief thus breathes she forth her  
     spite  
 Against the unseen secrecy of night :

' O comfort-killing Night, image of hell !  
 Dim register and notary of shame !  
 Black stage for tragedies and murders fell !  
 Vast sin-concealing chaos ! nurse of blame !  
 Blind muffled bawd ! dark harbour for defame !  
     Grim cave of death ! whispering conspirator  
     With close-tongued treason and the ravisher !

' O hateful, vaporous, and foggy Night !  
 Since thou art guilty of my cureless crime,  
 Muster thy mists to meet the eastern light,  
 Make war against proportion'd course of time ;  
 Or if thou wilt permit the sun to climb  
     His wonted height, yet ere he go to bed,  
     Knit poisonous clouds about his golden head.

' With rotten damps ravish the morning air ;  
 Let their exhaled unwholesome breaths make sick  
 The life of purity, the supreme fair,  
 Ere he arrive his weary noontide prick ;  
 And let thy misty vapours march so thick,  
     That in their smoky ranks his smother'd light  
     May set at noon and make perpetual night.

' Were Tarquin Night, as he is but Night's child,  
 The silver-shining queen he would disdain ;  
 Her twinkling handmaids too, by him defiled,  
 Through Night's black bosom should not peep  
     again :  
 So should I have co-partners in my pain ;  
     And fellowship in woe doth woe assuage,  
     As palmers' chat makes short their pilgrimage.

' Where now I have no one to blush with me,  
 To cross their arms and hang their heads with  
     mine,  
 To mask their brows and hide their infamy ;  
 But I alone alone must sit and pine,  
 Seasoning the earth with showers of silver brine,  
     Mingling my talk with tears, my grief with  
     groans,  
 Poor wasting monuments of lasting moans.

' O Night ! thou furnace of foul-reeking smoke,  
 Let not the jealous Day behold that face  
 Which underneath thy black all-hiding cloak  
 Immodestly lies martyr'd with disgrace :  
 Keep still possession of thy gloomy place,  
 That all the faults which in thy reign are made  
     May likewise be sepulchred in thy shade.

' Make me not object to the tell-tale Day !  
 The light will show, character'd in my brow,  
 The story of sweet chastity's decay,  
 The impious breach of holy wedlock vow :  
 Yea, the illiterate, that know not how,  
     To cipher what is writ in learned books,  
     Will quote my loathsome trespass in my looks.

' The nurse, to still her child, will tell my story,  
 And fright her crying babe with Tarquin's name ;  
 The orator, to deck his oratory,  
 Will couple my reproach to Tarquin's shame ;  
 Feast-finding minstrels, tuning my defame,  
     Will tie the hearers to attend each line,  
     How Tarquin wronged me, I Collatine.

' Let my good name, that senseless reputation,  
 For Collatine's dear love be kept unspotted :  
 If that be made a theme for disputation,  
 The branches of another root are rotted,  
 And undeserved reproach to him allotted  
 That is as clear from this attaint of mine,  
 As I ere this was pure to Collatine.

' O unseen shame ! invisible disgrace !  
 O unfelt sore ! crest-wounding, private scar !  
 Reproach is stamp'd in Collatinus' face,  
 And Tarquin's eye may read the mot afar,  
 How he in peace is wounded, not in war.  
 Alas ! how many bear such shameful blows,  
 Which not themselves, but he that gives them  
 knows.

' If, Collatine, thine honour lay in me,  
 From me by strong assault it is bereft.  
 My honey lost, and I, a drone-like bee,  
 Have no perfection of my summer left,  
 But robb'd and ransack'd by injurious theft :  
 In thy weak hive a wandering wasp hath crept,  
 And suck'd the honey which thy chaste bee kept.

' Yet am I guilty of thy honour's wrack ;  
 Yet for thy honour did I entertain him ;  
 Coming from thee, I could not put him back,  
 For it had been dishonour to disdain him :  
 Besides, of weariness he did complain him,  
 And talk'd of virtue : O ! unlook'd-for evil,  
 When virtue is profaned in such a devil.

'Why should the worm intrude the maiden bud?  
 Or hateful cuckoos hatch in sparrows' nests?  
 Or toads infect fair founts with venom mud?  
 Or tyrant folly lurk in gentle breasts?  
 Or kings be breakers of their own behests?  
 But no perfection is so absolute,  
 That some impurity doth not pollute.

'The aged man that coffers-up his gold  
 Is plagued with cramps and gouts and painful  
 fits;  
 And scarce hath eyes his treasure to behold,  
 But like still-pining Tantalus he sits,  
 And useless barns the harvest of his wits;  
 Having no other pleasure of his gain  
 But torment that it cannot cure his pain.

'So then he hath it when he cannot use it,  
 And leaves it to be master'd by his young;  
 Who in their pride do presently abuse it:  
 Their father was too weak, and they too strong,  
 To hold their cursed-blessed fortune long.  
 The sweets we wish for turn to loathed sour  
 Even in the moment that we call them ours.

'Unruly blasts wait on the tender spring;  
 Unwholesome weeds take root with precious  
 flowers;  
 The adder hisses where the sweet birds sing;  
 What virtue breeds iniquity devours:  
 We have no good that we can say is ours,  
 But ill-annexed Opportunity  
 Or kills his life, or else his quality.

' O Opportunity ! thy guilt is great,  
 'Tis thou that executest the traitor's treason ;  
 Thou sett'st the wolf where he the lamb may get ;  
 Whoever plots the sin, thou point'st the season ;  
 'Tis thou that spurn'st at right, at law, at reason ;  
 And in thy shady cell, where none may spy him,  
 Sits Sin to seize the souls that wander by him.

' Thou makest the vestal violate her oath ;  
 Thou blow'st the fire when temperance is thaw'd ;  
 Thou smother'st honesty, thou murder'st troth ;  
 Thou foul abettor ! thou notorious bawd !  
 Thou plantest scandal and displacest laud :  
 Thou ravisher, thou traitor, thou false thief,  
 Thy honey turns to gall, thy joy to grief.

' Thy secret pleasure turns to open shame,  
 Thy private feasting to a public fast,  
 • Thy smoothing titles to a ragged name,  
 Thy sugar'd tongue to bitter wormwood taste :  
 Thy violent vanities can never last.  
 How comes it then, vile Opportunity,  
 Being so bad, such numbers seek for thee ?

' When wilt thou be the humble suppliant's friend,  
 And bring him where his suit may be obtain'd ?  
 When wilt thou sort an hour great strifes to end ?  
 Or free that soul which wretchedness hath chain'd ?  
 Give physic to the sick, ease to the pain'd ?  
 The poor, lame, blind, halt, creep, cry out for  
 thee ;  
 But they ne'er meet with Opportunity.



'The patient dies while the physician sleeps;  
 The orphan pines while the oppressor feeds;  
 Justice is feasting while the widow weeps;  
 Advice is sporting while infection breeds:  
 Thou grant'st no time for charitable deeds:  
     Wrath, envy, treason, rape, and murder's rages,  
     Thy heinous hours wait on them as their pages.

'When Truth and Virtue have to do with thee,  
 A thousand crosses keep them from thy aid:  
 They buy thy help; but Sin ne'er gives a fee,  
 He gratis comes; and thou art well appaid  
 As well to hear as grant what he hath said.  
     My Collatine would else have come to me  
     When Tarquin did, but he was stay'd by thee.

'Guilty thou art of murder and of theft,  
 Guilty of perjury and subornation,  
 Guilty of treason, forgery, and shift,  
 Guilty of incest, that abomination;  
 An accessory by thine inclination  
     To all sins past, and all that are to come,  
     From the creation to the general doom.

'Misshapen Time, copesmate of ugly Night,  
 Swift subtle post, carrier of grisly care,  
 Eater of youth, false slave to false delight,  
 Base watch of woes, sin's pack-horse, virtue's snare;  
 Thou nursest all, and murder'st all that are;  
     O! hear me then, injurious, shifting Time,  
     Be guilty of my death, since of my crime.

‘Why hath thy servant, Opportunity,  
Betray’d the hours thou gavest me to repose?  
Cancell’d my fortunes, and enchained me  
To endless date of never-ending woes?  
Time’s office is to fine the hate of foes;  
    To eat up errors by opinion bred,  
    Not spend the dowry of a lawful bed.

‘Time’s glory is to calm contending kings,  
To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light,  
To stamp the seal of time in aged things,  
To wake the morn and sentinel the night,  
To wrong the wronger till he render right,  
    To ruinate proud buildings with thy hours,  
    And smear with dust their glittering golden  
    towers;

‘To fill with worm-holes state by monuments,  
To feed oblivion with decay of things,  
To blot old books and alter their contents,  
To pluck the quills from ancient ravens’ wings,  
To dry the old oak’s sap and cherish springs,  
    To spoil antiquities of hammer’d steel,  
    And turn the giddy round of Fortune’s wheel;

‘To show the beldam daughters of her daughter,  
To make the child a man, the man a child,  
To slay the tiger that doth live by slaughter,  
To tame the unicorn and lion wild,  
To mock the subtle in themselves beguiled,  
    To cheer the ploughman with increaseful crops,  
    And waste huge stones with little water-drops.

‘ Why work’st thou mischief in thy pilgrimage,  
 Unless thou couldst return to make amends ?  
 One poor retiring minute in an age  
 Would purchase thee a thousand thousand friends,  
 Lending him wit, that to bad debtors lends :

O ! this dread night, wouldst thou one hour  
 come back,

I could prevent this storm and shun thy wrack.

‘ Thou ceaseless lackey to eternity,  
 With some mischance cross Tarquin in his flight ;  
 Devise extremes beyond extremity,  
 To make him curse this cursed crimeful night :  
 Let ghastly shadows his lewd eyes affright,

And the dire thought of his committed evil

● Shape every bush a hideous shapeless devil.

‘ Disturb his hours of rest with restless trances,  
 Afflict him in his bed with bedrid groans ;  
 Let there bechance him pitiful mischances  
 To make him moan, but pity not his moans ;  
 Stone him with harden’d hearts, harder than  
 stones ;

And let mild women to him lose their mildness,  
 Wilder to him than tigers in their wildness.

‘ Let him have time to tear his curled hair,  
 Let him have time against himself to rave,  
 Let him have time of Time’s help to despair,  
 Let him have time to live a loathed slave,  
 Let him have time a beggar’s orts to crave,  
 And time to see one that by alms doth live  
 Disdain to him disdained scraps to give.

' Let him have time to see his friends his foes,  
 And merry fools to mock at him resort ;  
 Let him have time to mark how slow time goes  
 In time of sorrow, and how swift and short  
 His time of folly and his time of sport ;  
     And ever let his unrecalling crime  
     Have time to wail the abusing of his time.

' O Time ! thou tutor both to good and bad,  
 Teach me to curse him that thou taught'st this ill ;  
 At his own shadow let the thief run mad,  
 Himself himself seek every hour to kill :  
 Such wretched hands such wretched blood should  
     spill ;  
     For who so base would such an office have  
     As slanderous deathsman to so base a slave ?

' The baser is he, coming from a king,  
 To shame his hope with deeds degenerate :  
 The mightier man, the mightier is the thing  
 That makes him honour'd, or begets him hate ;  
 For greatest scandal waits on greatest state.  
     The moon being clouded presently is miss'd,  
     But little stars may hide them when they list.

' The crow may bathe his coal-black wings in mire,  
 And unperceived fly with the filth away ;  
 But if the like the snow-white swan desire,  
 The stain upon his silver down will stay.  
 Poor grooms are sightless night, kings glorious day,  
     Gnats are unnoted wheresoe'er they fly,  
     But eagles gazed upon with every eye.

‘Out, idle words ! servants to shallow fools,  
 Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators !  
 Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools ;  
 Debate where leisure serves with dull debaters ;  
 To trembling clients be you mediators :  
     For me, I force not argument a straw,  
     Since that my case is past the help of law.

‘In vain I rail at Opportunity,  
 At Time, at Tarquin, and uncheerful Night ;  
 In vain I cavil with mine infamy,  
 In vain I spurn at my confirm’d despite ;  
 This helpless smoke of words doth me no right.  
     The remedy indeed to do me good  
     Is to let forth my foul-defiled blood.

‘Poor hand, why quiverest thou at this decree ?  
 Honour thyself to rid me of this shame ;  
 For if I die, my Honour lives in thee,  
 But if I live, thou livest in my defame ;  
 Since thou couldst not defend thy loyal dame,  
     And wast afraid to scratch her wicked foe,  
     Kill both thyself and her for yielding so.’

This said, from her be-tumbled couch she starteth,  
 To find some desperate instrument of death ;  
 But this no slaughterhouse, no tool imparteth  
 To make more vent for passage of her breath ;  
 Which, thronging through her lips, so vanisheth  
     As smoke from *Ætna*, that in air consumes,  
     Or that which from discharged cannon fumes.

‘In vain,’ quoth she, ‘I live, and seek in vain.’

Some happy mean to end a hapless life :  
 I fear'd by Tarquin's falchion to be slain,  
 Yet for the self-same purpose seek a knife :  
 But when I fear'd I was a loyal wife :  
 So am I now : O no ! that cannot be ;  
 Of that true type hath Tarquin rifled me.

' O ! that is gone for which I sought to live,  
 And therefore now I need not fear to die.  
 To clear this spot by death, at least I give  
 A badge of fame to slander's livery ;  
 A dying life to living infamy.

" Poor helpless help, the treasure stol'n away,  
 To burn the guiltless casket where it lay !

' Well, well, dear Collatine, thou shalt not know  
 The stained taste of violated troth ;  
 I will not wrong thy true affection so,  
 To flatter thee with an infringed oath ;  
 This bastard graff shall never come to growth :  
 He shall not boast who did thy stock pollute  
 That thou art doting father of his fruit.

' Nor shall he smile at thee in secret thought,  
 Nor laugh with his companions at thy state ;  
 But thou shalt know thy interest was not bought  
 Basely with gold, but stol'n from forth thy gate.  
 For me, I am the mistress of my fate,  
 And with my trespass never will dispense,  
 Till life to death acquit my forced offence.

' I will not poison thee with my attaint,  
 Nor fold my fault in cleanly-coin'd excuses ;

My sable ground of sin I will not paint,  
 To hide the truth of this false night's abuses :  
 My tongue shall utter all ; mine eyes, like slutes,  
     As from a mountain-spring that feeds a dale,  
 Shall gush pure streams to purge my impure  
 tale.'

By this, lamenting Philomel had ended  
 The well-tuned warble of her nightly sorrow,  
 And solemn night with slow sad gait descended  
 To ugly hell ; when, lo ! the blushing morrow  
 Lends light to all fair eyes that light will borrow :  
     But cloudy Lucrece shames herself to see,  
 And therefore still in night would cloister'd be."

Revealing day through every cranny spies,  
 And seems to point her out where she sits weep-  
 ing ;  
 To whom she sobbing speaks : ' O eye of eyes !  
 Why pry'st thou through my window ? leave thy  
 peeping ;  
 Mock with thy tickling beams eyes that are sleep-  
 ing ;  
 Brand not my forehead with thy piercing light,  
 For day hath nought to do what's done by  
 night.'

Thus cavils she with every thing she sees :  
 True grief is fond and testy as a child,  
 Who wayward once, his mood with nought agrees :  
 Old woe, not infant sorrows, bear them mild ;  
 Continuance tames the one ; the other wild,  
     Like an unpractised swimmer plunging still,  
 With too much labour drowns for want of skill.

So she, deep-drenched in a sea of care,  
Holds disputation with each thing she views,  
And to herself all sorrow doth compare ;  
No object but her passion's strength renews,  
And as one shifts, another straight ensues :  
Sometime her grief is dumb and hath no words ;  
Sometime 't is mad and too much talk affords.

The little birds that tune their morning's joy  
Make her moans mad with their sweet melody :  
For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy ;  
Sad souls are slain in merry company ;  
Grief best is pleased with grief's society :  
True sorrow then is feelingly sufficed  
When with like semblance it is sympathized.

'T is double death to drown in ken of shore ;  
He ten times pines that pines beholding food ;  
To see the salve doth make the wound ache more ;  
Great grief grieves most at that would do it good ;  
Deep woes roll forward like a gentle flood,  
Who, being stopp'd, the bounding banks o'er-  
flows ;  
Grief dallied with nor law nor limit knows.

'You mocking birds,' quoth she, 'your tunes en-  
tomb

Within your hollow-swelling feather'd breasts,  
And in my hearing be you mute and dumb :  
My restless discord loves no stops nor rests ;  
A woeful hostess brooks not merry guests :



Relish your nimble notes to pleasing ears ;  
Distress likes dumps when time is kept with  
tears.

' Come, Philomel, that sing'st of ravishment,  
Make thy sad grove in my dishevell'd hair :  
As the dank earth weeps at thy languishment,  
So I at each sad strain will strain a tear,  
And with deep groans the diapason bear ;  
For burden-wise I'll hum on Tarquin still,  
While thou on Tereus descant'st better skill.

' And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part  
To keep thy sharp woes waking, wretched I,  
To imitate thee well, against my heart  
Will fix a sharp knife to affright mine eye,  
Who, if it wink, shall thereon fall and die.  
These means, as frets upon an instrument,  
Shall tune our heart-strings to true languish-  
ment.

' And for, poor bird, thou sing'st not in the day,  
As shaming any eye should thee behold,  
Some dark deep desert, seated from the way,  
That knows not parching heat nor freezing cold,  
Will we find out ; and there we will unfold  
To creatures stern sad tunes, to change their  
kinds :  
Since men prove beasts, let beasts bear gentle  
minds.'

As the poor frightened deer, that stands at gaze,  
Wildly determining which way to fly,  
Or one encompass'd with a winding maze,

That cannot tread the way out readily ;  
 So with herself is she in mutiny,  
 To live or die which of the twain were better,  
 When life is 'shamed, and death reproach's  
 debtor.

'To kill myself,' quoth she, 'alack ! what were it,  
 But with my body my poor soul's pollution ?  
 They that lose half with greater patience bear it  
 Than they whose whole is swallow'd in confusion.  
 That mother tries a merciless conclusion,  
 Who, having two sweet babes, when death takes  
 one  
 Will slay the other and be nurse to none.'

'My body or my soul, which was the dearer,  
 When the one pure, the other made divine ?  
 Whose love of either to myself was nearer,  
 When both were kept for heaven and Collatine ?  
 Ay me ! the bark peel'd from the lofty pine,  
 His leaves will wither and his sap decay ;  
 So must my soul, her bark being peel'd away.

'Her house is sack'd, her quiet interrupted,  
 Her mansion batter'd by the enemy ;  
 Her sacred temple spotted, spoil'd, corrupted,  
 Grossly engirt with daring infamy :  
 Then let it not be call'd impiety,  
 If in this blemish'd fort I make some hole  
 Through which I may convey this troubled soul.

'Yet die I will not, till my Collatine  
 Have heard the cause of my untimely death ;

That he may vow, in that sad hour of mine,  
 Revenge on him that made me stop my breath.  
 My stained blood to Tarquin I'll bequeath,  
 Which by him tainted shall for him be spent  
 And as his due writ in my testament.

' My honour I'll bequeath unto the knife  
 That wounds my body so dishonoured.  
 'T is honour to deprive dishonour'd life ;  
 The one will live, the other being dead :  
 So of shame's ashes shall my fame be bred ;  
 For in my death I murder shameful scorn :  
 My shame so dead, mine honour is new-born.

' Dear lord of that dear jewel I have lost,  
 What legacy shall I bequeath to thee ?  
 My resolution, love, shall be thy boast,  
 By whose example thou revenged mayst be.  
 How Tarquin must be used, read it in me :  
 Myself, thy friend, will kill myself, thy foe,  
 And for my sake serve thou false Tarquin so.

' This brief abridgement of my will I make :  
 My soul and body to the skies and ground ;  
 My resolution, husband, do-thou take ;  
 Mine honour be the knife's that makes my wound ;  
 My shame be his that did my fame confound ;  
 And all my fame that lives disbursed be  
 To those that live, and think no shame of me.

' Thou, Collatine, shalt oversee this will ;  
 How was I overseen that thou shalt see it !

My blood shall wash the slander of mine ill ;  
My life's foul deed, my life's fair end shall free it.  
Faint not, faint heart, but stoutly say "So be it" :  
Yield to my hand ; my hand shall conquer  
thee :  
Thou dead, both die, and both shall victors be.'

This plot of death when sadly she had laid,  
And wiped the brinish pearl from her bright eyes,  
With untuned tongue she hoarsely calls her maid,  
Whose swift obedience to her mistress hies ;  
For fleet-wing'd duty with thought's feathers flies.  
Poor Lucrece' cheeks unto her maid seem so  
As winter meads when sun doth melt their  
snow.

Her mistress she doth give demure good-morrow,  
With soft slow tongue, true mark of modesty,  
And sorts a sad look to her lady's sorrow,  
For why her face wore sorrow's livery ;  
But durst not ask of her audaciously  
Why her two suns were cloud-eclipsed so,  
Nor why her fair cheeks over-wash'd with woe.

But as the earth doth weep, the sun being set,  
Each flower moisten'd like a melting eye ;  
Even so the maid with swelling drops 'gan wet  
Her circled eyne, enforced by sympathy  
Of those fair suns set in her mistress' sky,  
Who in a salt-waved ocean quench their light,  
Which makes the maid weep like the dewy  
night.

A pretty while these pretty creatures stand,  
 Like ivory conduits coral cisterns filling ;  
 One justly weeps, the other takes in hand ;  
 No cause but company of her drops spilling ;  
 Their gentle sex to weep are often willing,  
     Grieving themselves to guess at others' smart,  
 And then they drown their eyes or break their  
     hearts :

For men have marble, women waxen minds,  
 And therefore are they form'd as marble will ;  
 The weak oppress'd, the impression of strange  
     kinds

Is form'd in them by force, by fraud, or skill :  
 Then call them not the authors of their ill,  
 No more than wax shall be accounted evil  
     Wherein is stamp'd the semblance of a devil.

Their smoothness, like a goodly champaign plain,  
 Lays open all the little worms that creep ;  
 In men, as in a rough-grown grove, remain  
 Cave-keeping evils that obscurely sleep :  
 Through crystal walls each little mote will peep :  
     Though men can cover crimes with bold stern  
     looks,  
 Poor women's faces are their own faults' books.

No man inveigh against the wither'd flower,  
 But chide rough winter that the flower hath  
     kill'd :

Not that devour'd, but that which doth devour,  
 Is worthy blame. O ! let it not be hild  
 For women's faults, that they are so fulfil'd

With men's abuses : those proud lords, to blame,  
Make weak-made women tenants to their shame.

The precedent whereof in Lucrece view,  
Assail'd by night with circumstances strong  
Of present death, and shame that might ensue  
By that her death, to do her husband wrong :  
Such danger to resistance did belong,  
That dying fear through all her body spread ;  
And who cannot abuse a body dead ?

By this, mild patience bid fair Lucrece speak  
To the poor counterfeit of her complaining ;  
' My girl,' quoth she, ' on what occasion break  
Those tears from thee, that down thy cheeks are  
raining ?

If thou dost weep for grief of my sustaining,  
Know, gentle wench, it small avails my mood :  
If tears could help, mine own would do me good.

' But tell me, girl, when went,' and there she  
stay'd

Till after a deep groan, ' Tarquin from hence ?'  
' Madam, ere I was up,' replied the maid,  
' The more to blame my sluggard negligence :  
Yet with the fault I thus far can dispense ;  
Myself was stirring ere the break of day,  
And, ere I rose, was Tarquin gone away.

' But lady, if your maid may be so bold,  
She would request to know your heaviness.'  
' O ! peace,' quoth Lucrece : ' if it should be told,

The repetition cannot make it less ;  
 For more it is than I can well express :  
 And that deep torture may be call'd a hell,  
 When more is felt than one hath power to tell.

'Go, get me hither paper, ink, and pen :  
 Yet save that labour, for I have them here.  
 What should I say ? One of my husband's men  
 Bid thou be ready by and by, to bear  
 A letter to my lord, my love, my dear :  
 Bid him with speed prepare to carry it ;  
 The cause craves haste, and it will soon be  
 writ.'

Her maid is gone, and she prepares to write,  
 'First hovering o'er the paper with her quill :  
 Conceit and grief an eager combat fight ;  
 What wit sets down is blotted straight with will ;  
 This is too curious-good, this blunt and ill :  
 Much like a press of people at a door  
 Throng her inventions, which shall go before.

At last she thus begins : 'Thou worthy lord  
 Of that unworthy wife that greeteth thee,  
 Health to thy person ! next vouchsafe t' afford,  
 If ever, love, thy Lucrece thou wilt see,  
 Some present speed to come and visit me.  
 So I commend me from our house in grief :  
 My woes are tedious, though my words are  
 brief.'

Here folds she up the tenour of her woe,  
 Her certain sorrow writ uncertainly.

By this short schedule Collatine may know  
 Her grief, but not her grief's true quality :  
 She dares not thereof make discovery,  
 Lest he should hold it her own gross abuse,  
 Ere she with blood had stain'd her stain'd

Besides, the life and feeling of her passion  
 She hoards, to spend when he is by to hear her ;  
 When sighs and groans and tears may grace the  
 fashion

Of her disgrace, the better so to clear her  
 From that suspicion which the world might bear  
 her.

To shun this blot, she would not blot the letter  
 With words, till action might become them  
 better.

To see sad sights moves more than hear them told ;  
 For then the eye interprets to the ear  
 The heavy motion that it doth behold,  
 When every part a part of woe doth bear :.

'T is but a part of sorrow that we hear ;  
 Deep sounds make lesser noise than shallow  
 fords,  
 And sorrow ebbs, being blown with wind of  
 words.

Her letter now is seal'd, and on it writ  
 \* ' At Ardea to my lord, with more than haste.'  
 The post attends, and she delivers it,  
 Charging the sour-faced groom to hie as fast  
 As lagging fowls before the northern blast :



Speed more than speed but dull and slow she  
deems :

Extremity still urgeth such extremes.

The homely villain court'sies to her low ;  
And, blushing on her, with a steadfast eye  
Receives the scroll without or yea or no,  
And forth with bashful innocence doth he :  
But they whose guilt within their bosoms lie  
Imagine every eye beholds their blame ;  
For Lucrece thought he blush'd to see her  
shame :

When, silly groom ! God wot, it was defect  
Of spirit, life, and bold audacity.  
Such harmless creatures have a true respect  
To talk in deeds, while others saucily  
Promise more speed, but do it leisurely :  
Even so this pattern of the worn-out age  
Pawn'd honest looks, but laid no words to gage.

His kindled duty kindled her mistrust,  
That two red fires in both their faces blazed ;  
She thought he blush'd, as knowing Tarquin's  
lust,  
And, blushing with him, wistly on him gazed ;  
Her earnest eye did make him more amazed :  
The more she saw the blood his cheeks re-  
plenish,  
The more she thought he spied in her some  
blemish.

But long she thinks till he return again,

And yet the duteous vassal scarce is gone.  
The weary time she cannot entertain,  
For now 't is stale to sigh, to weep, and groan :  
So woe hath wearied woe, moan tired moan,  
That she her plaints a little while doth stay,  
Pausing for means to mourn some newer way.

At last she calls to mind where hangs a piece  
Of skilful painting, made for Priam's Troy ;  
Before the which is drawn the power of Greece,  
For Helen's rape the city to destroy,  
Threat'ning cloud-kissing Ilion with annoy ;  
Which the conceited painter drew so proud,  
As heaven, it seem'd, to kiss the turrets bow'd.

A thousand lamentable objects there,  
In scorn of nature, art gave lifeless life ;  
Many a dry drop seem'd a weeping tear,  
Shed for the slaughter'd husband by the wife :  
The red blood reek'd, to show the painter's strife ;  
And dying eyes gleam'd forth their ashy lights,  
Like dying coals burnt out in tedious nights.

There might you see the labouring pioner  
Begrimed with sweat, and smeared all with dust ;  
And from the towers of Troy there would appear  
The very eyes of men through loop-holes thrust,  
\* Gazing upon the Greeks with little lust :  
Such sweet observance in this work was had,  
\* That one might see those far-off eyes look sad.

In great commanders grace and majesty  
You might behold, triumphing in their faces ;

In youth quick bearing and dexterity ;  
 And here and there the painter interlaces  
 Pale cowards, marching on with trembling paces ;  
 Which heartless peasants did so well resemble,  
 That one would swear he saw them quake and  
 tremble.

In Ajax and Ulysses, O ! what art  
 Of physiognomy might one behold ;  
 The face of either cipher'd either's heart ;  
 Their face their manners most expressly told :  
 In Ajax' eyes blunt rage and rigour roll'd ;  
 But the mild glance that sly Ulysses lent  
 Show'd deep regard and smiling government.

There pleading might you see grave Nestor stand,  
 As 't were encouraging the Greeks to fight ;  
 Making such sober action with his hand,  
 That it beguiled attention, charm'd the sight.  
 In speech, it seem'd, his beard, all silver white,  
 Wagg'd up and down, and from his lips did fly  
 Thin winding breath, which purld up to the sky.

About him were a press of gaping faces,  
 Which seem'd to swallow up his sound advice ;  
 All jointly listening, but with several graces,  
 As if some mermaid did their ears entice,  
 Some high, some low, the painter was so nice ;  
 The scalps of many, almost hid behind,  
 To jump up higher seem'd, to mock the mind.

Here one man's hand lean'd on another's head,  
 His nose being shadow'd by his neighbour's ear ;

Here one being throng'd bears back, all boll'n and  
red ;  
Another smother'd seems to pelt and swear ;  
And in their rage such signs of rage they bear,  
As, but for loss of Nestor's golden words,  
It seem'd they would debate with angry swords.

For much imaginary work was there ;  
Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,  
That for Achilles' image stood his spear,  
Griped in an armed hand ; himself behind  
Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind :  
A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head,  
Stood for the whole to be imagin'd.

And from the walls of strong-besieged Troy  
When their brave hope, bold Hector, march'd to  
field,  
Stood many Trojan mothers, sharing joy  
To see their youthful sons bright weapons wield ;  
And to their hope they such odd action yield,  
That through their light joy seemed to appear,  
Like bright things stain'd, a kind of heavy fear.

And from the strand of Dardan, where they  
fought,  
To Simois' reedy banks the red blood ran,  
Whose waves to imitate the battle sought  
With swelling ridges ; and their ranks began  
To break upon the galled shore, and than  
Retire again, till meeting greater ranks  
They join and shoot their foam at Simois'  
banks.

To this well-painted piece is Lucrece come,  
 To find a face where all distress is stell'd.  
 Many she sees where cares have carved some,  
 But none where all distress and dolour dwell'd,  
 Till she despairing Hecuba beheld,  
     Staring on Priam's wounds with her old eyes,  
     Which bleeding under Pyrrhus' proud foot lies.

In her the painter had anatomized  
 Time's ruin, beauty's wreck, and grim care's  
     reign :  
 Her cheeks with chaps and wrinkles were dis-  
     guised ;  
 Of what she was no semblance did remain ;  
 Her blue blood changed to black in every vein,  
     Wanting the spring that those shrunk pipes had  
     fed,  
     Show'd life imprison'd in a body dead.

On this sad shadow Lucrece spends her eyes,  
 And shapes her sorrow to the beldam's woes,  
 Who nothing wants to answer her but cries,  
 And bitter words to ban her cruel foes :  
 The painter was no god to lend her those ;  
     And therefore Lucrece swears he did her wrong,  
     To give her so much grief and not a tongue.

' Poor instrument,' quoth she, ' without a sound,  
 I'll tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue,  
 And drop sweet balm in Priam's painted wound,  
 And rail on Pyrrhus that hath done him wrong,  
 And with my tears quench Troy that burns so  
     long,

And with my knife scratch out the angry eyes  
Of all the Greeks that are thine enemies.

‘ Show me the strumpet that began this stir,  
That with my nails her beauty I may tear.  
Thy heat of lust, fond Paris, did incur  
This load of wrath that burning Troy doth bear :  
Thine eye kindled the fire that burneth here ;  
And here in Troy, for trespass of thine eye,  
The sire, the son, the dame, and daughter die.

‘ Why should the private pleasure of some one  
Become the public plague of many moe ?  
Let sin, alone committed, light alone  
Upon his head that hath transgressed so ;  
Let guiltless souls be freed from guilty woe :  
For one’s offence why should so many fall,  
To plague a private sin in general ?

‘ Lo ! here weeps Hecuba, here Priam dies,  
Here manly Hector faints, here Troilus swoonds,  
Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies,  
And friend to friend gives unadvised wounds,  
And one man’s lust these many lives confounds :  
Had doting Priam check’d his son’s desire,  
Troy had been bright with fame and not with  
fire.’

Here feelingly she weeps Troy’s painted woes ;  
For sorrow, like a heavy-hanging bell,  
Once set on ringing, with his own weight goes ;  
Then little strength rings out the doleful knell :  
So Lucrece, set a-work, sad tales doth tell

To pencill'd pensiveness and colour'd sorrow;  
 She lends them words, and she their looks doth  
 borrow.

She throws her eyes about the painting round,  
 And whom she finds forlorn she doth lament:  
 At last she sees a wretched image bound,  
 That piteous looks to Phrygian shepherds lent;  
 His face, though full of cares, yet show'd content;  
 Onward to Troy with the blunt swains he goes,  
 So mild, that Patience seem'd to scorn his woes.

In him the painter labour'd with his skill  
 To hide deceit, and give the harmless show  
 An humble gait, calm looks, eyes wailing still,  
 A brow unbent that seem'd to welcome woe;  
 Cheeks neither red nor pale, but mingled so  
 That blushing red no guilty instance gave,  
 Nor ashy pale the fear that false hearts have.

But, like a constant and confirmed devil,  
 He entertain'd a show so seeming-just,  
 And therein so ensconced his secret evil,  
 That jealousy itself could not mistrust  
 False-creeping craft and perjury should thrust  
 Into so bright a day such black-faced storms,  
 Or blot with hell-born sin such saint-like forms.

The well-skill'd workman this mild image drew  
 For perjured Sinon, whose enchanting story  
 The credulous old Priam after slew;  
 Whose words like wildfire burnt the shining glory  
 Of rich-built Ilion, that the skies were sorry,

And little stars shot from their fixed places,  
When their glass fell wherein they view'd their  
faces.

This picture she advisedly perused,  
And chid the painter for his wondrous skill,  
Saying, some shape in Sinon's was abused ;  
So fair a form lodged not a mind so ill .  
And still on him she gazed, and gazing still,  
Such signs of truth in his plain face she spied,  
That she concludes the picture was belied.

'It cannot be,' quoth she, 'that so much guile'—  
She would have said 'can lurk in such a look' ;  
But Tarquin's shape came in her mind the while,  
And from her tongue 'can lurk' from 'cannot'  
took :

'It cannot be' she in that sense forsook,  
And turn'd it thus, 'It cannot be, I find,  
But such a face should bear a wicked mind :

'For even as subtle Sinon here is painted,  
So sober-sad, so weary, and so mild,  
As if with grief or travail he had fainted,  
To me came Tarquin armed ; so beguiled  
With outward honesty, but yet defiled  
With inward vice : as Priam him did cherish,  
So did I Tarquin ; so my Troy did perish.

'Look, look, how listening Priam wets his eyes,  
To see those borrow'd tears that Sinon sheds !  
Priam, why art thou old and yet not wise ?



For every tear he falls a Trojan bleeds :  
 His eye drops fire, no water thence proceeds ;  
 Those round clear pearls of his, that move thy  
 pity,  
 Are balls of quenchless fire to burn thy city.

‘ Such devils steal effects from lightless hell ;  
 For Sinon in his fire doth quake with cold,  
 And in that cold hot-burning fire doth dwell ;  
 These contraries such unity do hold,  
 Only to flatter fools and make them bold :  
 So Priam’s trust false Sinon’s tears doth flatter,  
 That he finds means to burn his Troy with  
 water.’

Here, all enraged, such passion her assails,  
 That patience is quite beaten from her breast.  
 She tears the senseless Sinon with her nails,  
 Comparing him to that unhappy guest  
 Whose deed hath made herself herself detest :  
 At last she smilingly with this gives o’er ;  
 ‘ Fool ! fool ! ’ quoth she, ‘ his wounds will not  
 be sore.’

Thus ebbs and flows the current of her sorrow,  
 And time doth weary time with her complaining.  
 She looks for night, and then she longs for morrow,  
 And both she thinks too long with her remaining :  
 Short time seems long in sorrow’s sharp sustaining :  
 Though woe be heavy, yet it seldom sleeps ;  
 And they that watch see time how slow it creeps.

Which all this time hath overslipp’d her thought,  
 That she with painted images hath spent ;

Being from the feeling of her own grief brought  
 By deep surmise of others' detriment ;  
 Losing her woes in shows of discontent.

It easeth some, though none it ever cured,  
 To think their dolour others have endured.

But now the mindful messenger, come back,  
 Brings home his lord and other company ;  
 Who finds his Lucrece clad in mourning black ;  
 And round about her tear-distained eye  
 Blue circles stream'd, like rainbows in the sky :  
 These water-galls in her dim element  
 Foretell new storms to those already spent.

Which when her sad-beholding husband saw,  
 Amazedly in her sad face he stares :  
 Her eyes, though sod in tears, look'd red and raw,  
 Her lively colour kill'd with deadly cares.  
 He hath no power to ask her how she fares :  
 Both stood like old acquaintance in a trance,  
 Met far from home, wondering each other's  
 chance.

At last he takes her by the bloodless hand,  
 And thus begins : ' What uncouth ill event  
 Hath thee befall'n, that thou dost trembling stand ?  
 Sweet love, what spite hath thy fair colour spent ?  
 Why art thou thus attired in discontent ?  
 Unmask, dear dear, this moody heaviness,  
 And tell thy grief, that we may give redress.'

Three times with sighs she gives her sorrow fire,  
 Ere once she can discharge one word of woe :

At length address'd to answer his desire,  
 She modestly prepares to let them know  
 Her honour is ta'en prisoner by the foe ;  
     While Collatine and his consorted lords  
     With sad attention long to hear her words.

And now this pale swan in her watery nest  
 Begins the sad dirge of her certain ending.  
 ' Few words,' quoth she, ' shall fit the trespass best,  
 Where no excuse can give the fault amending :  
 In me moe woes than words are now depending ;  
     And my laments would be drawn out too long,  
     To tell them all with one poor tired tongue.

' Then be this all the task it hath to say :  
 Dear husband, in the interest of thy bed  
 A stranger came, and on that pillow lay  
 Where thou wast wont to rest thy weary head ;  
 And what wrong else may be imagined  
     By foul enforcement might be done to me,  
     From that, alas ! thy Lucrece is not free.

' For in the dreadful dead of dark midnight,  
 With shining falchion in my chamber came  
 A creeping creature, with a flaming light,  
 And softly cried " Awake, thou Roman dame,  
 And entertain my love ; else lasting shame  
     On thee and thine this night I will inflict,  
     If thou my love's desire do contradict.

" For some hard-favour'd groom of thine," quoth  
     he,  
 " Unless thou yoke thy liking to my will,

I'll murder straight, and then I'll slaughter thee,  
And swear I found you where you did fulfil  
The leathsome act of lust, and so did kill  
The lechers in their deed : this act will be  
My fame, and thy perpetual infamy."

' With this I did begin to start and cry,  
And then against my heart he set his sword,  
Swearing, unless I took all patiently,  
I should not live to speak another word ;  
So should my shame still rest upon record,  
And never be forgot in mighty Rome  
The adulterate death of Lucrece and her groom.

' Mine enemy was strong, my poor self weak,  
And far the weaker with so strong a fear :  
My bloody judge forbade my tongue to speak ;  
No rightful plea might plead for justice there :  
His scarlet lust came evidence to swear  
That my poor beauty had purloin'd his eyes ;  
And when the judge is robb'd the prisoner dies.

' O ! teach me how to make mine own excuse,  
Or at the least this refuge let me find ;  
Though my gross blood be stain'd with this abuse,  
Immaculate and spotless is my mind ;  
That was not forced ; that never was inclined  
To accessary yieldings, but still pure  
Doth in her poison'd closet yet endure.'

Lo ! here the hopeless merchant of this loss,  
With head declined, and voice damm'd up with  
woe,

With sad set eyes, and wretched arms across,  
 From lips new-waxen pale begins to blow  
 The grief away that stops his answer so :

But, wretched as he is, he strives in vain ;

What he breathes out his breath drinks up  
 again.

As through an arch the violent roaring tide  
 Outruns the eye that doth behold his haste,  
 Yet in the eddy boundeth in his pride  
 Back to the strait that forced him on so fast ;  
 In rage sent out, recall'd in rage, being past :

Even so his sighs, his sorrows, make a saw,  
 To push grief on, and back the same grief draw.

Which speechless woe of his poor she attendeth,  
 And his untimely frenzy thus awaketh :

' Dear lord, thy sorrow to my sorrow lendeth  
 Another power ; no' flood by raining slaketh.

My woe too sensible thy passion maketh

More feeling-painful : let it then suffice

To drown one woe, one pair of weeping eyes.

' And for my sake, when I might charm thee so,  
 For she that was thy Lucrece, now attend me :

Be suddenly revenged on my foe,

Thine, mine, his own : suppose thou dost defend  
 me

From what is past : the help that thou shalt lend  
 me

Comes all too late, yet let the traitor die ;

For sparing justice feeds iniquity.

‘ But ere I name him, you, fair lords,’ quoth she,  
 Speaking to those that came with Collatine,  
 ‘ Shall plight your honourable faiths to me,  
 With swift pursuit to venge this wrong of mine ;  
 For ’t is a meritorious fair design  
 To chase injustice with revengeful arms :  
 Knights, by their oaths, should right poor  
 ladies’ harms.’

At this request, with noble disposition  
 Each present lord began to promise aid,  
 As bound in knighthood to her imposition,  
 Longing to hear the hateful foe bewray’d .  
 But she, that yet her sad task hath not said,  
 The protestation stops. ‘ O ! speak,’ quoth she,  
 ‘ How may this forced stain be wiped from me ?

‘ What is the quality of mine offence,  
 Being constrain’d with dreadful circumstance ?  
 May my pure mind with the foul act dispense,  
 My low-declined honour to advance ?  
 May any terms acquit me from this chance ?  
 The poison’d fountain clears itself again ;  
 And why not I from this compelled stain ?’

With this, they all at once began to say,  
 Her body’s stain her mind untainted clears ;  
 While with a joyless smile she turns away  
 The face, that map which deep impression bears  
 \* Of hard misfortune, carved in it with tears.  
 ‘ No, no,’ quoth she, ‘ no dame, hereafter living,  
 By my excuse shall claim excuse’s giving.’

Here with a sigh, as if her heart would break,  
She throws forth Tarquin's name: 'He, he,' she

But more than 'he' her poor tongue could not  
speak;

Till after many accents and delays,  
Untimely breathings, sick and short assays,  
She utters this, 'He, he, fair lords, 't is he,  
That guides this hand to give this wound to me.

Even here she sheathed in her harmless breast  
A harmful knife, that thence her soul unsheathed:  
That blow did bail it from the deep unrest  
Of that polluted prison where it breathed;  
Her contrite sighs unto the clouds bequeathed  
Her winged sprite, and through her wounds  
doth fly  
Life's lasting date from cancell'd destiny.

Stone-still, astonish'd with this deadly deed,  
Stood Collatine and all his lordly crew;  
Till Lucrece' father, that beholds her bleed,  
Himself on her self-slaughter'd body threw;  
And from the purple fountain Brutus drew  
The murderous knife, and, as it left the place,  
Her blood, in poor revenge, held it in chase;

And bubbling from her breast, it doth divide  
In two slow rivers, that the crimson blood  
Circles her body in on every side,  
Who like a late-sack'd island, vastly stood,  
Bare and unpeopled in this fearful flood.  
Some of her blood still pure and red remain'd,

And some look'd black, and that false Tarquin  
stain'd.

About the mourning and congealed face  
Of that black blood a watery rigól goes,  
Which seems to weep upon the tainted place :  
And ever since, as pitying Lucrece' woes,  
Corrupted blood some watery token shows ;  
And blood untainted still doth red abide,  
Blushing at that which is so putrified.

'Daughter, dear daughter !' old Lucretius cries,  
'That life was mine which thou hast here  
deprived.

If in the child the father's image lies,  
Where shall I live now Lucrece is unliv'd ?  
Thou wast not to this end from me derived.

If children pre-decease progenitors,  
We are their offspring, and they none of ours.

'Poor broken glass, I often did behold  
In thy sweet semblance my old age new born ;  
But now that fair fresh mirror, dim and old,  
Shows me a bare-bon'd death by time outworn.  
O ! from thy cheeks my image thou hast torn,  
And shiver'd all the beauty of my glass,  
That I no more can see what once I was.

'O time ! cease thou thy course, and last no  
longer,

If they surcease to be that should survive,  
Shall rotten death make conquest of the stronger,



And leave the faltering feeble souls alive ?  
 The old bees die, the young possess their hive ;  
 Then live, sweet Lucrece, live again and see  
 Thy father die, and not thy father thee.

By this starts Collatine as from a dream,  
 And bids Lucretius give his sorrow place ;  
 And then in key-cold Lucrece' bleeding stream  
 He falls, and bathes the pale fear in his face,  
 And counterfeits to die with her a space ;  
 Till manly shame bids him possess his breath  
 And live to be revenged on her death.

The deep vexation of his inward soul  
 Hath served a dumb arrest upon his tongue ;  
 Who, mad that sorrow should his use control,  
 Or keep him from heart-easing words so long,  
 Begins to talk ; but through his lips do throng  
 Weak words so thick, come in his poor heart's aid,  
 That no man could distinguish what he said.

Yet sometime 'Tarquin' was pronounced plain,  
 But through his teeth, as if the name he tore.  
 This windy tempest, till it blow up rain,  
 Held back his sorrow's tide to make it more ;  
 At last it rains, and busy winds give o'er :  
 Then son and father weep with equal strife  
 Who should weep most, for daughter or for wife.

The one doth call her his, the other his,  
 Yet neither may possess the claim they lay.  
 The father says 'She's mine.' 'O! mine she is,  
 Replies her husband ; 'do not take away  
 My sorrow's interest ; let no mourner say  
 He weeps for her, for she was only mine,  
 And only must be wail'd by Collatine.'

‘O!’ quoth Lucretius, ‘I did give that life  
 Which she too early and too late hath spill’d.’  
 ‘Woe, woe!’ quoth Collatine, ‘she was my wife,  
 I owed her, and ’t is mine that she hath kill’d.’  
 ‘My daughter’ and ‘my wife’ with clamours  
 fill’d  
 The dispersed air, who, holding Lucrece’ life,  
 Answer’d their cries, ‘my daughter’ and ‘my  
 wife.’

Brutus, who pluck’d the knife from Lucrece’ side,  
 Seeing such emulation in their woe,  
 Began to clothe his wit in state and pride,  
 Burying in Lucrece’ wound his folly’s show.  
 He with the Romans was esteemed so  
 As silly-jeering idiots are with kings,  
 For sportive words and uttering foolish things :

But now he throws that shallow habit by,  
 Wherein deep policy did him disguise ;  
 And arm’d his long-hid wits advisedly,  
 To check the tears in Collatinus’ eyes.  
 ‘Thou wronged lord of Rome,’ quoth he, ‘arise :  
 Let my unsounded self, supposed a fool,  
 Now set thy long-experienced wit to school.

‘Why, Collatine, is woe the cure for woe ?  
 Do wounds help wounds, or grief help grievous  
 deeds ?  
 Is it revenge to give thyself a blow  
 For his foul act by whom thy fair wife bleeds ?  
 Such childish humour from weak minds proceeds :  
 Thy wretched wife mistook the matter so,  
 To lay herself that should have slain her foe.

'Courageous Roman, do not steep thy heart  
 In such relenting due of lamentations ;  
 But kneel with me and help to bear thy part,  
 To rouse our Roman gods with invocations,  
 That they will suffer these abominations,  
 Since Rome herself in them doth stand dis-  
 graced,  
 By our strong arms from forth her fair streets  
 chas'd.

'Now, by the Capitol that we adore,  
 And by this chaste blood so unjustly stain'd,  
 By heaven's fair sun that breeds the fat earth's  
 store,  
 By all our country rights in Rome maintain'd,  
 And by chaste Lucrece' soul, that late complain'd  
 Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody knife,  
 We will revenge the death of this true wife.'

This said, he struck his hand upon his breast,  
 And kiss'd the fatal knife to end his vow ;  
 And to his protestation urg'd the rest,  
 Who, wondering at him, did his words allow :  
 Then jointly to the ground their knees they bow ;  
 And that deep vow which Brutus made before,  
 He doth again repeat, and that they swore.

When they had sworn to this advised doom,  
 They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence ;  
 To show her bleeding body thorough Rome,  
 And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence :  
 Which being done with speedy diligence,  
 The Romans p'ausibly did give consent  
 To Tarquin's everlasting banishment.

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